

**Declaration by District Leaders of Adjumani, Arua, Koboko, Maracha, Moyo, Yumbe, Pakwach, Nebbi, Zombo, Madi-Okollo and Obongi.**

The District leaders of **West Nile**, aware that our sub-region has a big population of young people hence, a high dependency ratio;

Aware that many young girls continue to have babies when they are still children themselves; their opportunity for education and skilling are curtailed which undermines the ability to fulfill their potential in life, directly affecting the socio-economic development of the region and the country as a whole;

Recognizing that an unacceptable number of mothers especially those who conceive as teenagers, those with closely spaced pregnancies, women who have had 5 pregnancies and above and young girls with unwanted/unplanned pregnancies are dying due to complications of pregnancies, child birth or criminal abortions;

Cognizant of the fact that access to and utilization of sexual reproductive health information and services is limited especially amongst the young people;

Aware that child spacing and family planning offers health benefits to the mother, children and the family in totality, but cultural beliefs, myths and misconceptions still impede demand, access to and uptake of modern family planning methods.

Aware that gender based violence (GBV) remains prevalent in our communities mainly due to the power inequalities between men and women compounded by alcohol and drug abuse, lack of awareness and inadequacies of GBV response and mitigation structures and mechanisms;

We the leaders of **West Nile sub-region** commit to supporting investments for harnessing Demographic Dividend (DD) by domesticating and integrating DD interventions in LG development plans, sector work plans and annual budgets. Investing in young people through refocusing on improving the quality of education to ensure that young people especially the girl child complete primary and secondary education; Investing in skills development through increased tertiary education, innovation and entrepreneurship; Enhance creation of quality jobs and getting more young people in to gainful employment; Strengthening health systems to ensure a healthy population, child survival and reduction in the death of mothers due to pregnancy related complications and child birth; Increasing access of young people to sexual and reproductive health information and services; and renew our promise by empowering our youth to contribute to socio economic transformation and development.

**Now therefore, we the undersigned undertake to:**

1. Ensure that all school-going age children including **girls** are at school at all times by undertaking sustained advocacy targeting the district and lower local government leadership;
2. Pass appropriate bye-laws and ordinances against child marriages and teenage pregnancies and work with cultural, traditional and religious leaders to advocate against child marriages and teenage pregnancy. (No cultural or religious institution provides a marriage certificate where an underage child is involved);
3. Increase young people's access to Sexual and Reproductive Health information and services through active sexuality education at home, communities and in schools;
4. Support provision of adolescent and youth friendly services for both in and out of school adolescents and youth;
5. Ensure that all pregnant women attend antenatal care (4 times during pregnancy) **along with their spouses** and delivery under skilled care attendance in Health facilities;
6. Ensure that every man with a pregnant spouse has **plan for delivery** –active male involvement (saving financial resources for emergencies).
7. Promote access to information for family planning services by all our communities and a right to choose when and how many children to produce;
8. Enforce implementation of laws and policies that govern gender based violence and promote the rights of women, girls, boys and men;
9. Enforce implementation of laws and policies to fight substance and alcohol abuse in our communities;
10. Raise awareness on Gender Based Violence, its causes, prevention, mitigation and response measures using all avenues including organizing community barazas;
11. Ensure inclusion of an integrated packages of rights (maternal mortality, unmet need for Family Planning, freedom from GBV and harmful practices) in the District Development Plans, sector Annual Work Plans and budgets;
12. Put in place an inter-district co-ordinated campaign against early marriages and teenage pregnancy in the West Nile Sub-region;
13. Advocate for youth in employment through promotion of small scale and value addition enterprises, linkage to opportunities and appropriate development programs;

14. Identify and nurture innovations among young people in the region through increased young people's participation in planning, resource allocation, decision making, advocacy and accountability at all levels;
15. Allocate resources for data generation and management to inform evidence based decision and resource mobilization.

**Therefore;**

We, the undersigned leaders adopt this declaration, including the messages herein on this 10<sup>th</sup> day of the Seventh Month of the Year 2019, and shall ensure that it is passed and domesticated by all the District and Lower Local governments.

This declaration is a commitment by the highest authority in each district local government and its implementation shall be monitored by the West Nile Development Association (WENDA) and West Nile Parliamentary Forum (WNPF) in collaboration with the representatives of cultural, traditional and religious institutions.

Progress of its implementation shall be reviewed on an annual basis both at the district and regional level.

	District	Name	Title	Signature
1.	Adjumani	A100 JOSEPHINE	FOR DISTRICT CHAIR AST	
2.	Arua	SABO A. KAMULO	FOR DISTRICT CHAIR PERSON	
3.	Nebbi			
4.	Koboko	NGINYA HASSAN SAHA	DISTRICT CHAIRMAN	Hassan
5.	Moyo	ANYAMA WILLIAMS	DISTRICT CHAIRPERSON	A
6.	Yumbe	ALEJO JANE	Sec Social Services LCS	
7.	Maracha	ADIGA W. LAWRENCE	DISTRICT CHAIRMAN	
8.	Zombo	ORWANY JOHN BROMBO	District person	
9.	Pakwach	AKELLO JESIA OKOR	NICP PAK FOR LCS	
10.	Madi Okolo			
11.	Obongi	MAIKU SIDI PAUL	LCS C/P ONE	