

**A STATEMENT ON THE WORLD POPULATION DAY (11<sup>TH</sup> JULY) ON THE THEME FAMILY PLANNING; EMPOWERING PEOPLE, DEVELOPING NATIONS BY DR. MARK KURT NAWAANE. (MP FOR NABDAM AND A MEMBER OF THE ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE)**

Mr. Speaker, since 1989, 11<sup>th</sup> of July is commemorated as the World Population day. By resolution 45/216 of December 1990, the United Nations General Assembly decided to continue observing World Population day to stimulate discussions on the critical issues of population including its relation with the environment and development.

The recent rapid increase in human population over the past three centuries has raised concerns that the planet Earth may not be able to sustain present or future numbers of inhabitants. At the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, during the industrial revolution, the world population grew significantly from 250 million people to 1 billion.

Mr. Speaker, also since 1950, due to medical advancement and an increase in Agricultural productivity, we have seen a dramatic growth in the world population. At the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the world population was estimated at 1.6 billion people. By 1940 it stood at 2.3 billion people. Currently UN Population assessment report estimates the world population as 7.5 billion. It is expected to be 9 billion in 2050 and 15 billion by 2100.

Mr. Speaker, the concept of overpopulation with its associated problems such as poverty, underdevelopment, unemployment, global warming, pollution and deforestation made intellectuals such as Thomas Malthus to predict that Mankind will outgrow its available resources. They therefore thought that, wars, famine and other calamities were natural interventions to reduce population. Indeed Malthus postulated in his theory that, there is a constant tendency in all animated life to increase beyond the nourishment for it, and so where the means of subsistence increases, population invariably increase unless prevented by external factors such as natural disasters, earthquakes, wars, famine, diseases, plaques etc.

Mr. Speaker, there is no need for natural disasters and calamities to control population growth. The antidote is in Family Panning. The family planning programme has decreased the fertility rate of women and enabled the contraceptive prevalence rate to increase.

It is therefore not surprising the theme for this year's celebration is **Family Planning; Empowering People, Developing Nations.**



Mr. Speaker, The world population day this year coincides with the Family Planning summit expected to take place in London. The UK Department for international development will co-host the global summit with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, United States Agency for International development and Global Affairs Canada. There are also National Programmes on this day which seeks to focus attention on population issues.

The Family Planning summit will enable stakeholders to provide a platform for donors to complement and commit themselves to assist poor but needy countries find financial solutions to address the short fall in contraceptives. It will also enable the family planning community to share experiences and display technical innovations that have the potential to accelerate progress in family planning. This can be achieved through short films, data visualization and other dynamic story telling tools.

Mr. Speaker, an estimated 225 million women in developing countries who want to delay or stop childbearing are not using any method of contraception. The reason for this include cultural and religious reasons, lack of information and limited access to contraception and lack of cooperation from their men partners.

The range of contraceptive methods over the last few decades has been increasing. They include the condoms, female contraceptives, and female hormonal preparations intra uterine devices, Norplant's insertions Minilaporatomy with bilateral tubal ligation, the standard day's method and the male sterilization (Vasectomy)

Mr. Speaker, Family planning is key to slowing unsustainable population growth and the resulting negative impacts on the economy, environment and national development effort. For the first time in history, 300 million women and girls across 69 developing countries are now using modern contraceptives. This has led to the prevention of 82 million unwanted pregnancies, 25 million unsafe abortions and 125,000 maternal death.

Mr. Speaker, access to voluntary Family Planning is a human right .It is also central to gender equality and women empowerment; and is a key factor in reducing poverty. In Ghana Family Planning is prioritized as a key strategy for addressing critical socioeconomic issues. Evidence



from data since 1988 suggest a sluggish performance in the family planning programming. Between 1988 and 2014, the use of oral contraceptives almost doubled from 13% to 22%. Also total fertility rate dropped from 6.4% to 4% in 2008 and marginally increasing to 4.2% in 2014. The contraceptive prevalence rate fluctuated from 19% in 2003 decreasing to 17% in 2008 and increasing to 22% in 2014.

Therefore in Ghana the use of Family planning methods is less than desired despite the high level of universal knowledge and awareness. Indeed, Government and other stakeholders have invested heavily in family planning without achieving marked and sustained improvements in its Family Planning indicators.

In conclusion, Mr. Speaker there is the need to carry out a comprehensive sexuality education as a channel for information for young people. Since faith, religious beliefs and cultural practices also influence Family Planning, we need to explore culturally sensitive approaches for the different populations.

Our Family planning programme is highly dependent on donor financing. It is time the Government of Ghana show commitment by allocating adequate budgetary funds to ensure an uninterrupted implementation of the programme. There are instances where women who are on hormonal contraceptive preparations report to the Family Planning providers only to be told that they are out of stock.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, our country Ghana needs an integrated and coordinated Family Planning programme, starting with the critical assessment of the strategies that work, setting of realistic targets and the institutionalization of a multi-sectoral management arrangement to facilitate the effective implementation of the family Planning programme.

