

Announcement by the Democratic Republic of the Congo at the International Conference on Family Planning
Addis Ababa, November 12-15, 2013

Greetings to the participants.

Congratulations to the organizers.

It should be noted that the current domestic situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is dominated by recent military operations in the east of the country, which have just put an end to the M23 rebellion. As a result, displaced populations are gradually returning to their villages.

This situation requires special attention from the government and prevented senior Congolese officials invited to this conference from attending.

Please accept their regrets.

It is on behalf of the Office of the Prime Minister, Head of Government, **His Excellency, Matata Ponyo Mapon**, that we read this announcement of the DRC's commitment to Family Planning.

The DRC's Family Planning **vision** is focused on the concept of "responsible parenthood and welcome births." As such, in 1972, the DRC pioneered the establishment of a family planning program, which made substantial progress until 1990. However, these efforts were erased by the various crises the country underwent.

The goal of the Family Planning program is to ensure that no pregnancy is a burden or life-threatening to mother and child. Likewise, no birth should be a cause of distress for the father. **Each birth must be welcome.**

To this effect, the constitution of the DRC, in articles 45, 47, 48 and 49, guarantees the right and access to basic social services for the entire Congolese population.

Within this framework, it is the will of **His Excellency, Joseph Kabila Kabange**, President of the Republic, Head of State, to make the DRC an emerging country by 2030.

In this regard, the revitalization of Family Planning, as described in the second Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (GPRSP 2), will enable the attainment of demographic dividends necessary for sustainable and inclusive economic development.

Towards this end, **concrete actions by the government** are:

1. The allocation of one million US dollars for the purchase of contraceptives in 2013;
2. The introduction of a line in the budget for Family Planning and Reproductive Health;
3. The creation of a National Strategic Plan for Family Planning for the period from 2014-2020. This plan aims to increase: (a) the modern contraceptive prevalence rate from 5.4% (2010) to 19% (2020) and (b) the number of users of modern contraceptive methods from 700,000 (2010) to 2.1 million (2020).

However, major challenges to reaching these goals are:

1. Scaling-up the supply of family planning and reproductive health services throughout the entire country (516 Health Zones), which requires mobilizing additional internal and external resources;
2. Security in the Eastern Congo, which implies support from the international community, the African Union, sub-regional and local organizations. Among other benefits, this would lead to a substantial decrease in sexual violence which is used as a weapon of war.

To meet these challenges, the government of the DRC is **committed to:**

1. Protecting adolescent girls from early marriage through programs for education, raising awareness, social reintegration and women's empowerment;
2. Reforming laws which pose a barrier to responsible parenthood and planned births;
3. Gradually increasing its contribution to the implementation of the National Strategic Plan for 2014-2020, particularly for the purchase of contraceptives.

Thank you.

Announcement made in Addis Ababa, November 14, 2013.

For the Office of the Prime Minister,

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