

High-Level Task Force for the ICPD

Celebrating Cairo & Going Beyond

Side event 47th session of the Commission on Population and Development

Talking Points for Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin

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I am very happy to be here and to see so many partners and powerful advocates for women and girls in the room today – governments and international organizations, civil society, women’s and youth groups, women leaders and men. I’d like to thank the High-Level Task Force for bringing us together to celebrate Cairo and to join forces to continue to advance its forward-looking agenda.

We all know that there can be no sustainable development without moving the sexual and reproductive health and rights agenda forward. With the dedication and the energy in this room and beyond, especially within the precincts of the United Nations this week, we believe that the global movement for universal access to sexual reproductive health and rights will be fulfilled. I am confident that we will continue to advance. In fact, I think we might be unstoppable.

Let us remember that the successes in Cairo nearly 20 years ago were due in large part to the power of civil society. Civil society played such a key role because governments and other partners working together towards the same goals could not bring the level of energy which was required to have the outcome that we accomplished. Civil society has been at the centre of all we have done since Cairo – with the reviews, Cairo+5, +10, +15, and also in the current review +20. What we are doing now is to make sure we craft a new programme that goes forward beyond 2014. And so, the times demand that we stand strong together once again.

We have the evidence to support all the arguments we make. The benefits of investing in sexual and reproductive health are well known to all of you and well documented. Such investments deliver substantial social and economic returns for women, young people, their families and communities.

There is wide agreement that the Post-2015 Development Agenda must have people at its core. It must be based on equity, inclusiveness, human rights and choices and opportunities for all. And I want to say, it is not just people, it is women and girls who must be at the centre of the development agenda beyond 2015. They are the most marginalized and they need to be brought to parity with everyone around the world. This is just, it is strategic and we believe it is possible.

Consistent with this holistic and human rights-based vision, we at UNFPA believe that the post-2015 agenda should be designed to:

- Realize gender equality and women's empowerment, and advance their sexual and reproductive rights;
- Achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health services throughout the life cycle, especially for women and adolescents;
- Expand the capabilities that young people, especially adolescent girls, require for employment, health, resilience, participation and citizenship;
- Enhance national capacity to assess, project and plan for population dynamics that affect sustainable development. In many of our countries, we don't even have the data to show how many adolescent girls exist. Many of them are invisible;
- Protect individuals, families and communities from conflict, disaster and violence, including eliminating all forms of violence against women and girls. Let me add that the greatest violence against a girl is to marry her off at the age of 10.

To "go beyond" Cairo, we have to be strong, courageous, creative, tenacious, and we must be united.

We have to work together to promote a development framework in which every person, including those most vulnerable and marginalized, counts.

This requires stronger accountability mechanisms, with meaningful involvement of women, young people and other civil society and marginalized groups in decision-making and monitoring, so that governments at all levels, development partners and the international community fulfill their commitments. The private sector also has to be brought in.

And we need more funding – both domestic resources and ODA.

We also must recognize young people in the development agenda. As we consider human development and sustainability, it is crucial that we do so *for* and *with* young people.

We have the largest generation of young people the world has ever seen – nearly two billion strong. The investments we make today to meet their needs and aspirations – investments in their health, education and opportunities for work, innovation and entrepreneurship, will determine whether we are able to meet our post-2015 goals and achieve sustainable development.