

Good Afternoon. Ladies, gentlemen, people of all kinds, thank you for allowing me to share with you on this momentous 30-year anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development.

The ICPD was at the time and still is an extraordinary Programme of Action that enshrines and details the interdependence of the the inherent right of girls and women to reproductive autonomy, the right and need to be free from male violence, poverty reduction, and inclusive sustainable development - which as we now vividly live on a daily basis - is the only way Earth survives us, and we with it.

ICPD outlines and concretizes the values toward which we work, in order to achieve human flourishing and that inclusive sustainable development: The ability to chose if and when to have children, and how many. The ability to say no to sex free from retaliation. Universal education. Full participation in the economy. Living in harmony with the environment.

Imprinted into my psyche, this glorious, aspirational document has guided my 20 years of traveling the world, drawing needed attention to and uplifting sexual and reproductive health and rights in slums, brothels, refugee and IDP camps, schools and drop in centers. I am grateful that we are having these conversations now, because the world is in desperate need of a blueprint for the future. We are grateful that the ICPD still provides it. It is so sweet to see Babatunde's name signed on the ICPD! We honor his legacy.

I remember so clearly being in Madagascar when a woman who was being commercially sexually exploited by men taught me that it was gender inequality was the at the root of how she both ended up in the brothel on whose floor we sat in a puppy pile, and how she stayed trapped there. Each woman had her story of how she come to be in this physically and emotionally traumatic setting of serial body invasion by men: "I didn't have

land rights, so when my husband died, my in laws came and kicked me out of my home”. “My field flooded, and the crop failed, and I could no longer feed my children, and this man came said he knew way he could help me earn money.” “My husband made me do this, and beats me if I do not cooperate.” “My uncle sold me.” The one woman I mentioned, when it was her turn to share her story, just exhaustedly waved her hand in the hot air: Same ole, same old. Her path, she was saying, differed only the details. The root cause was the same. The sexual, reproductive, legal, political, social, and cultural inequality of girls and women. And, of course, all of these women had several children. I was with them in part to see how an NGO was reaching them with contraception and HIV/AIDS prevention and testing and rapid results.

I also remember sitting on a very crowded floor of a UNFPA clinic in South Sudan, where displaced women were chatting and laughing, waiting for their appointments for modern family planning methods. They were so relieved to be freed from the imminent terror of becoming pregnant during armed conflict, in their country so riven by crisis. Their good cheer and smiles made me cry.

In Turkey, where I spent time with the remarkably compassionate and brilliant UNFPA field workers last August, both Turkish families and Syrian refugees living in provisional tents and containers with one semi functioning latrine for hundreds of people declared that emotionally, mentally, and physically, they were in no condition to bring a baby into their traumatized circumstances. I am so grateful UNFPA is there, diligently doing all it can. to provision modern family planning choices to those who want them, in spite of the government removing their availability in the public sector.

Women with whom I have sat all over the world still live in fear of their next unintended pregnancy. They fear dying in labor, their baby dying,

having more children than their exhausted bodies can bear, care for, feed, find health care for, send to school, protect from child marriage, and male violence. I am profoundly grateful for UNFPA's partnership with me in DR Congo, in the deepest depth of the Central African Rainforest, where we have established the first ever maternal health care clinic. A courageous young woman of the forest has gone to Kinshasa to train as a midwife. When she returns, her villages will pay her salary in goats and chicken, and she will help safely deliver babies. This will accelerate wellness for women, their families, and development for those remote villages,

The ICPD stirs our loftiest imaginings of what can be, what we can do together as an international body and in partnership, especially with youth led and grassroots movements. Cooperation is core to inclusive sustainable development. As is said in Cameroon, "if you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Let's take a hint from the Cameroonians, and also the SDGs, and do both, achieving those urgent goals and arriving at full sexual rights and reproductive health for all, and an inclusive sustainable development, swiftly and together.

I appreciate all that has been accomplished these past 30 years, and exhort us all to apply the good lessons learned toward the progress still urgently needed.

Thank you.

