Good morning to you all.

This gathering here today is very important for my Ministry – Ministry of Health.

Population and Development is part and parcel of health. You will agree with me that, majority of health service beneficiaries are young people. Therefore, if young people themselves are taking initiatives to better their health conditions and standard of living is commendable.

Just last year 2018, The Gambia has launched its Health Compact which paves the way for renewed and strategic partnership between the Government of the Republic of The Gambia and health development partners.

The Health Compact is guided by the principles outlined within the framework of the International Health Partnership Plus (IHP+), the 2005 Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the 2008 Accra Agenda for Action. It was expected to contribute to accelerating the progress towards Universal Health Coverage, i.e. access to high quality and affordable health care that will lead to improved and equitable health outcomes for all Gambians.

Mr Chairman, Distinguish guests, ladies and gentlemen,

Allow me to give you some insights of the current Health Situation of The Gambia.

As of 2015, The Gambia achieved the Millennium Development Goals for Infant Mortality Rate, Under-5 Mortality Rate, immunization coverage, proportion of population using an improved drinking water source, primary schools enrolment and reduction in...
Malaria disease burden. The maternal mortality ratio, however, remains unacceptably high at 433/100,000 live births (GDHS 2013), which exceeds the 2015 MDG target (263/100,000) and it continues to be a major challenge for health service delivery.¹

Through our partnership with World Health Organization as well as the West African Health Organization and other development partners, we have developed the “Gambia National Health Policy 2012-2020”.

The theme, “HEALTH IS WEALTH”: “Acceleration of Quality Health Services and Universal Coverage”, which is the current philosophy which our national health policy is hinged upon becomes a reality only when a healthy population can contribute to improved productivity, increased GDP and sustained economic growth and overall ensure social equilibrium. Hence the slogan: “A Healthy population is a Wealthy population”.

The mission of the Ministry of Health is to contribute to socioeconomic development and wealth creation by promoting and protecting the health of the population through equitable provision of quality health care within the context of Primary Health Care. This mission puts the concept of health beyond the confines of curative care to other socio-economic determinants of health.

The health sector despite remarkable achievements registered since 1994 to date is still under great pressure due to a number of factors: high population growth rate, increasing morbidity and mortality, insufficient financial and logistic support, deterioration of physical infrastructure, inadequacies of supplies and equipment, shortage of adequately and appropriately trained health personnel, high attrition rate as well as inadequate referral system. Poverty and ignorance have led to inappropriate health seeking behaviours thus contributing to ill health.

The Ministry of Health remains committed to supporting youth development and empowerment particularly investing in young people’s health and education. We will continue to work with the Ministry of Youth and Sports and The Gambia National Youth Council to put youth issues at the forefront of our work.

With those few remarks, I thank the West African Health Organization (WAHO) for supporting this forum and all the partnership for their collaboration.

Thank you for your kind attention.

¹ https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/136857/ccsbrief_gmb_en.pdf?jsessionid=7A0CC405ED0A5075B8E01DD2A643093F?sequence=1