

**Vote of Thanks**

**by**

**Dr. Lorna Tumwebaze**

**Deputy Executive Director**

**Partners in Population and Development**

**at the**

**Africa Regional Consultation on**

**Achieving MDG 5:**

**Challenges, Opportunities and Lessons Learned**

**at**

**Speke Resort Munyonyo, Kampala**

**March 27, 2012**

**Honorable Janet Museveni, Uganda's First Lady and Minister for Karamoja Affairs**

**Honorable Dr. Christine Ondo, Minister of Health Uganda**

**Honorable Members of Parliament**

**Ms. Jill W. Sheffield, President Women Deliver**

**Dr. Jotham Musinguzi, Regional Director, Partner's in Population and Development (PPD) Africa  
Regional Office**

**Ms. Janet Jackson, UNFPA Representative Uganda**

**Honourable Martin Chungong, Director, Inter-parliamentary Union (IPU)**

**Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen**

Your Excellency, Maama Janet Museveni, it's my unique and singular honor on behalf of the participants and meeting organizers to say that we applaud you for choosing to volunteer your name and social status as a mother, policy maker, responsible citizen, patron of Safe Motherhood program in Uganda, and founder of Uganda Women's Efforts to Save Orphans (UWESO) to give a voice to many constituencies that I will briefly highlight.

We thank you for giving a voice to a mother who is not in this audience and not on the participants list, that is appealing to be given an opportunity to experience the joy of giving birth to a live and healthy baby and not die from a pregnancy related cause.

We thank you for lending a voice to a child that is saying let me:

- Be conceived as a wanted child
- Be carried to term without ending in an abortion or miscarriage
- Be delivered safely
- Survive the first 14 days of my neonatal period to see my first and fifth birth days, and
- Grow without being stunted.

A child who is crying out that if a tragedy were to happen and I lose my mother from a pregnancy related cause, help me to survive and grow up like any other child with parents to become a responsible citizen.

We thank you for offering a voice to an adolescent or young person that is crying out to be:

- Protected from being married off young
- Equipped with information, skills and the means to avoid getting a teenage pregnancy and an unwanted child

An adolescent who is pleading that if by misfortune, I end up with a teenage pregnancy, access me information and services so that I don't end up with a fistula or any other pregnancy related complications, and support me to revive my dreams and aspirations and help me to advance my life.

We thank you for providing a voice to families/households, communities and men that are saying we feel the burden of losing mothers and children, involve us meaningfully in efforts to improve maternal, new born and child health.

We thank you that you are imploring service providers to look deep within and uphold ethical principles and human values while they are being supported with intensified advocacy efforts with the government(s) to provide them an enabling and motivating working environment including commodities and supplies to facilitate them to provide quality services to save the lives of women and children.

We thank you for reminding and challenging development partners, the civil society including Faith Based Organizations (FBOs), and the private sector to work as partners with the public sector and to prioritize the agenda of 'zero tolerance' for maternal, new born and child mortality.

We thank you for being a resourceful example and appealing to other policy makers that it's the right thing to do and a noble cause to lend their voices as duty bearers to provide the needed political will and to be held accountable to ensuring adequate resources and an enabling policy environment for multi-sectoral and multi-disciplinary programs to improve maternal, newborn and child health.

We thank you for providing words of wisdom, encouraging and challenging the participants of the Africa regional consultative meeting on achieving MDG 5, that in defining strategies to address and reduce maternal, new born and child mortality they should:

- Think extra ordinarily and act beyond the norm
- Borrow a leaf from how Uganda and other countries realized declining HIV/AIDS pandemic trends and impact mitigation.
- Tap into the existing wealth of knowledge, best practices and advancement in technology
- Strengthen South–South collaboration

Lastly, on behalf of Women Deliver, Partners in Population and Development, and the meeting participants, we applaud you for gracing the Africa regional consultative meeting on achieving MDG 5 as a champion for women's and children health, and as a duty bearer that has unwavering commitment in advocating for every mother and child's life to count and that no woman should die while giving birth and no child should die being born!