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Word from the Board Chairperson, National Population Council (NPC)

This year's World Population Day comes at a time when a National Population Council (NPC) has been established by the National Population Council Act No. 8, 2014 to provide strategic leadership to the work of the NPC Secretariat.

The primary role of the NPC is to ensure smooth implementation of the National Population Policy and Programme and to promote the integration of population factors in development planning in accordance with Uganda's national development frameworks.

As we join the rest of the world to commemorate 2016 World Population Day, I wish to reiterate the commitment of the National Population Council (NPC) to contribute significantly to achieving the goals and objectives of Uganda's Vision 2040.

The newly inaugurated NPC has identified key population and development issues that Uganda should tackle to achieve its development goal of becoming a middle income country by 2020 and an upper middle income country by 2040. I am glad to note that the National Development Plan (NDP) II has integrated the population structures into the strategies for achieving Uganda's development goals and aspirations.

A quality population is an asset that enhances development. However, creating a quality population requires focused investments in health, education, economic reforms, skills development, job creation and good governance. A quality population

can be harnessed to deliver socio-economic development and transformation. That way Uganda can benefit from the demographic dividend, hence this year's theme '*Harness Uganda's Demographic Dividend: Invest in Teenage Girls*'.

The National Population Council intends to focus on key game changers as a strategy that will contribute to achieving Uganda's development goals. Key issues include high fertility rate, high mortality rate, high dependency burden and economic reforms to create quality jobs.

On this year's World Population Day, I call upon policy makers, civil society organisations and development partners to invest in programmes, policies and strategies that target teenage girls and mobilize resources that will contribute to improved reproductive health, education and programmes that impart skills to young people and contribute to creating a competent human capital that will endear Uganda to its Vision 2040. There is no better time to invest in young people than today.

Thank you.