



Message from the Director General, National Population Council and its Secretariat

**Dr. Jotham Musinguzi, Director General,
National Population Council**

Since 1989, Uganda has been commemorating World Population Day each year. Uganda has been using this occasion to raise critical awareness, mobilize commitment and support among the country's leadership in government, civil society, private sector, donor community, media and the

general public, about the much needed attention to population and development issues. On this important day of marking 2016 World Population Day, I call on Ugandans and our development partners to prioritize efforts that will enable Uganda transform from a peasant society to an upper middle income country by 2040 as our Vision states.

This year's World Population Day focuses on investing in teenage girls under the theme '*Harness Uganda's Demographic Dividend: Invest in Teenage Girls*'. It is an important theme that sends a clarion call for critical interventions to change the plight of girls and young women who are often among the most vulnerable people in their communities.

The "Demographic Dividend", a notion of accelerated economic growth that occurs when the age structure of a country's population changes as it transitions from high to low birth and death rates, is every country's wish. It is important to note that the demographic dividend is not automatic and requires focused and sound investments in health, education, the economy and good governance.

The National Population Council and its Secretariat is committed to advancing the demographic dividend agenda as one of the strategies for achieving sustainable development in Uganda. Sustainable development, however, will require a multi-sectoral effort that calls for both vertical and horizontal collaboration as well as new and innovative approaches. Currently, Uganda's population structure presents both challenges and opportunities. The challenges which include a high dependence burden (a small number of

working people supporting a big number of dependents), high fertility and high mortality rates need to be addressed through targeted interventions while the opportunities need to be exploited.

Once the young people are empowered with education, skills and given opportunities to access the job market, they can become a productive workforce that can generate wealth, save, invest and propel Uganda into an upper middle income country by 2040. The National Population Council and its Secretariat is committed to working towards harnessing the demographic dividend for Uganda.

Happy 2016 World Population Day.