INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON FAMILY PLANNING
Nov 29 – Dec 30, 2011

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Dakar
DECEMBER 2, 2011 - PLENARY

OPENING STATEMENT:
MRS. AIDA MBODJ
SECRETARY OF STATE
HONORARY CHAIR

December 2, 2011
Ladies and Gentlemen; Dear participants,

We are gathered this morning to discuss the theme of our conference: “Ensuring the Right for Family Planning and its Advantages”. This has given us the opportunity for our distinguished guests, experts in this matter, to shed some light and show us how to reach our goals and how to meet the challenges that these goals present.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I appeal to Everyone’s commitment: Governments, communities, families, partners in development, NGO and individuals.

Each of them will have to play their part to ensure the Right for family planning.

Before concluding my remarks:

Ladies and Gentlemen; Dear participants,  
Dear Partners of development,

I encourage you to persevere in your current efforts, as well as urge you to continue to do more and more.
In my name, and in the name of the government of Senegal, I reaffirm my availability and my commitment to put forth all my effort to ensure that our dream becomes a reality.

Thank You For Listening

Neonatal mortality still remains high, up to 35 per 1,000 births, and represents more than half of infantile mortality.

Ladies and Gentlemen,
Poverty, illiteracy of parents, faulty socio-cultural beliefs, difficulty accessing health facilities, availability of services (mostly in rural areas), and the high cost of service delivery are all determinants that increase the situation.

We are aware that the rise of various information technologies in the last few years, primarily the use of cyberspace by the youth, as well as mobile phone usage, is a perpetual threat. Youth and adolescents from 15 to 24 are among the most exposed population to unwanted pregnancies and HIV infection. Youth are sexually active at a younger age and are not getting married until much later in life.

Access, usage and the promotion of female condoms also remains a challenge to be overcome.

Family planning, a self-determinant use in reproductive health, is starting to lose momentum in most African countries.

In Senegal, family planning promotion remains a priority to improve the situation.

The 2005 demographic health survey (EDS 4) reveals that only 7% of women of childbearing age use a modern contraceptive method versus 32% who say they wish they were using a modern contraceptive method. 21% of married women who don’t wish to have anymore children and 39% of women who wish to space their pregnancies out more don’t use any contraceptive methods.

This means that 800,000 women are exposed to unwanted pregnancies and abortion.

Concerning maternal mortality and morbidity, health conditions have improved during the last ten years, as proved by the death rate ratio lowering from 510 to 401 per 100,000 live births between 1992 and 2008.

In fact, from Rio de Janeiro to Copenhagen, including Cairo and Beijing, reproductive health and the Right for family planning have been at the center of the discussions. Successful sexual and reproductive health promotion requires correct information for populations concerning such related questions and, above all, access to health care and services wherever they may be. Each individual owns a piece of the responsibility, just as States and Governments do.
MDG 3, 4 and 5, dedicated to human development, promotes equality of the sexes and gives women the autonomy required to consider their specific, practical and strategic needs. From this perspective, fundamental and universal rights related to sexual and reproductive health figure prominently.

Therefore, all the supporters must double their efforts and work together in order to meet the goals of 2015. I am grateful to be participating in the international conference on family planning that has been held in our country for the past three days and would like to truly thank the initiators and the organizers of this very important event.

I truly value the honor of presiding over this morning’s plenary along with members of distinguished authorities and experts in reproductive health coming from all around the World.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We gather today to discuss a fundamental topic, concerning life itself, as well as the life of our families and communities.

Several high level meetings took place around the World to discuss this same topic, which further proves the importance of family planning among the populations.

Family planning gives everyone the Right to have a satisfying and safe sexual life, to have the freedom to procreate, and to have the wanted number of children at a planned period of time. Those are major advancements that should be available to everyone. This is, indeed, a difficult challenge, but an attainable one if we join our efforts.