

Gender

Organisation calls for increased support for family planning



By Mary Anane-Amponsah

THE Director General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), Dr Alvaro Bermejo, has called for sustained efforts relating to sexual and reproductive health, with particular focus on the needs of young people.

He has, therefore, urged the government to increase support for civil society

organisations while it improves the legal framework and implementation efforts.

He was speaking at the end of a three-day visit to Ghana, which included meetings with various stakeholders and visited ongoing projects by the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG), a member of the IPPF.

While in Ghana, Dr Bermejo, who was accompanied by the IPPF Regional Director for Africa, Marie-Evelyn Petrus-Barry, also held discussions on

challenges faced in the country's reproductive health landscape with the Ministry of Health and other development organisations and interacted with several young people and employees and managers of the PPAG.

Ghana's progress

He commended Ghana's progress over the past three decades in maternal health, teenage pregnancy reduction and the use of modern contraceptives.

The IPPF leader acknowledged Ghana's legal frameworks for reproductive health but noted implementation challenges and urged the country to address gaps in translating policies into tangible results.

He expressed concerns over the recent flattening curves in such indicators, which he said signalled potential challenges.

IPPF support

The IPPF, he said, was the largest organisation in the world working on sexual and reproductive health across 142 countries with a federation of member organisations.

He said the IPPF has a member per country and in Ghana, "it is PPAG. So in the 142 countries, we have other Planned Parenthood Associations that make the global federation and most of those organisations are in service provision."

Altogether, he said the IPPF could boast 40,000 clinics and service delivery points across the world "but we are not just the service provider; we use that experience generated through the service provision to inform our policy work to help shape government legislative frameworks and improve the environment in which we provide the services."

He said the IPPF was paying more attention to the West and Central Africa because it intends to increase its investment in the two regions, hence his official tour.

Currently, with support from donors, he said the IPPF disbursed about \$30 million annually to 100 of its member organisations in the form of grants, including the PPAG.

Dr Bermejo indicated that the visit to Ghana was also to find out how the IPPF could

support the PPAG to be a self-sustaining organisation.

Access to information

During a media interaction, Dr Bermejo emphasised the crucial role of communication, information and education in the area of reproductive health rights.

He highlighted issues faced by young and unmarried women in accessing timely information and services, leading to concerns about sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancies.

Dr Bermejo urged an honest examination of the age of sexual debut for women, emphasising the importance of providing information and services before individuals become sexually active.

Family planning challenges

The Executive Director of the PPAG, Abena Adubea Amoah reiterated the challenges in securing contraceptives due to shifting funding mechanisms.

She said the family planning methods used nationwide were donated as over 80 per cent of funding for family planning commodities was from donors.

The changing funding landscape, she said, leads to stockouts, contributing to increased teenage pregnancies and unsafe abortions.



• Dr Alvaro Bermejo (2nd from right), Director General, International Planned Parenthood Federation, addressing the press conference. With him is Abena Adubea Amoah (right), Executive Director, Planned Parenthood Association Ghana. Picture: ELVIS NII NOI DOWUONA