

Your Excellency, President of the General Assembly,

Your Excellency, Secretary General of the United Nations

Excellencies

Ladies and Gentlemen

Dear Civil Society Representatives, Good Afternoon

Thank you, Excellencies for extending this invitation to speak during this International Conference on Population and Development Commemoration of 25 years. Thank you also to UNFPA for their support. It is with great pleasure that I stand here to represent the voice of the civil society organizations that have gone against all odds to contribute to attaining the vision of the ICPD Programme of Action.

I was born 25 years ago in a rural village in Nakuru, Kenya, when the 179 Governments committed _____ classmate and home mate and we saw each other on a daily basis 15 years ago. She was a bright and ambitious student. Nyaguthii, myself and many young girls did not have access to comprehensive sexuality education. Unfortunately, Nyaguthii was denied her childhood as she was forced into an early unwanted marriage. She did not have access to family planning services and this resulted in an unplanned family which continues to be a toil on her.

Occasionally I visit her, but the bitterness in her heart is evident. She looks at me and imagines how her life would be if someone would have protected her from the child marriage and exposure to sexual and gender based violence. She was Vulnerable, she was a child and her rights were not respected.

