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42nd Session of the UN Commission on Population and Development

CPD Calls for Increased Funding to Reduce Unmet Needs

The 42nd Session of the United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD) was convened in New York from 30 March to 3 April.

The key agenda before the Commission was the contribution of the Cairo Programme of Action to the Millennium Development Goals. The world's developing countries made the case when they said on the opening day: "the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action is crucial to the eradication of extreme poverty."

Population Action International, New Zealand Family Planning International, Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP) and many others participated and delivered statements at the CPD, urging governments to devote more resources for population and sexual and reproductive health services.

The session concluded with the adoption of a resolution providing a guideline for international action over the next five

years to achieve the goals and objectives set forth Cairo Programme. Disagreements over abortion and terms such as "sexual and reproductive health and rights" elicited contentious debates. Population advocates believe that although the resolution was a compromise, its final text still provides good and workable guidelines.

Recognizing reproductive health as a human right, and recalling that in Cairo countries had committed to achieving universal access by 2015, the Commission urged Governments and development partners to improve maternal health, reduce maternal and infant mortality, and prevent and respond to the HIV/AIDS epidemic by strengthening health systems.

The Commission urged countries to ensure that everyone, particularly those in vulnerable situations, had access to a wide range of health-care services, including family planning, prenatal and post-natal care, safe delivery, treatment for fertility and sexually transmitted diseases, sex

education and quality services to manage complications arising from abortion. In countries where abortion is legal, health systems should train and equip service providers to ensure safe access, but not promote it as a method of family planning.

The Commission called on the international community to help Governments increase funding to reduce the unmet need for family planning, which was far below suggested targets, and ensure that it was included in national budgets.

It also called upon Governments to make it a priority in national development plans and budgets to address the impact of population dynamics on poverty and sustainable development, keeping in mind that universal health-care services and supplies, education and national capacity-building for population and development, as well as technology transfer to developing countries, were essential for achieving the Cairo Programme of Action, the Beijing Platform of Action and the MDGs. ■

Implementing and Investing in ICPD Programme of Action Crucial to Poverty Reduction



Ms Thoraya A. Obaid

Investments of \$64.7 billion are needed in 2010 for population programmes that are essential to reduce poverty, promote development and curtail maternal death, according to a revision approved by United Nations Members at the closing session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD) on 3 April. One third of this sum, about \$21.6 billion, is expected as international assistance, while the remaining two thirds would be domestic investments by developing nations.

The new figure of \$64.7 billion is a major revision of the \$20.5 billion (in 1993 United

States Dollars) for 2010 that was adopted at the 1994 Cairo International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). This is the first time in 15 years that the Cairo Programme of Action's cost estimates have been reviewed, as demanded by that global consensus.

A report of the United Nations Secretary-General says the revision was urgently needed due to the dramatic growth in current needs, with health-care costs skyrocketing and data collection costs rising, as many countries prepare for the 2010 round of censuses.

UN Members approved the new figures in recognition of the "dire need to increase the financial resources for the implementation" of the Cairo Programme, according to a resolution they adopted.

They were particularly concerned about funding for family planning, which was far below requirements.

The new estimates more accurately reflect current needs and are more in line with the investments required to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), said Ms Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, the Executive Director of UNFPA. In a statement delivered on her behalf by the Deputy Executive Director (Programme), Ms Purnima Mane, Ms Obaid said, "as the financial crisis unwinds, now is the time to increase social investment and redouble efforts for the ICPD agenda." (UNFPA) ■



Ms Purnima Mane

IPPF Urges Full Implementation of ICPD to Achieve Development Goals

On behalf of its 152 Member Associations worldwide, the International Planned Parenthood Federation presented its statement at the 42nd session of the CPD, delivered by Dr Gill Greer, IPPF Director-General.

Dr Greer stated that there is "clear evidence that the ICPD Programme of Action is crucial to the achievement of the MDGs" and that its "full implementation of the visionary and still unfinished agenda of Cairo is essential for the elimination of poverty, sustainable social and economic development in an inter-dependent world, and for the achievement of equity, social justice and human rights." Dr Greer emphasised that women and girls are drivers of development and their health and rights must be protected and promoted. Women's ability to exercise this most basic human right is vital for individual health and well-being, sustainable families and communities and a sustainable planet.



Dr Gill Greer, IPPF Director-General

Highlighting the lack of progress on MDG-5 (improving maternal health), she called for "urgent steps to address maternal mortality and morbidity, recognising that pregnancy-related factors including unsafe abortion are the major cause of death for girls under 19 in the developing world." IPPF believes that a comprehensive approach to sexual and reproductive health, especially for women and youth, is a good investment in the future. ■

Support for SRHR Crucial to Revitalising MDGs



Ms Lyn Brown, MP, UK

In the framework of European Parliamentary Forum's Parliamentary Taskforce dedicated to the UN which was launched at the beginning of 2008 in New York, EPF brought a six-member parliamentary delegation from European donor countries to this year's United Nations Commission on Population and Development (CPD). EPF delegation spokesperson, Ms Lyn Brown, MP from the United Kingdom, urged government delegations to recommit to the Millennium Development Goals. She emphasised that "we believe that the promotion of women's rights, sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender equality is absolutely fundamental to the fight against global poverty".

Being aware that political will is essential to achieve the set goals, members of the EPF delegation have pledged to sensitise their governments about a number of reproductive health issues such as the importance to ensure universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education and services.

The EPF delegation was composed of Mr Armen Melykian, MP, Armenia; Ms Yvonne Gilli, MP, Switzerland; Senator Evira Velasco Morillo of Spain; Ms Ilkka Kantola, MP, Finland; Ms Yolande Avondroodt, MP, Belgium; Ms Lyn Brown, MP, UK, as well as Mr Neil Datta, EPF Secretary and Ms Nadine Krysostan, Senior Advocacy Officer at EPF. (EPF) ■

New Priorities for ICPD Investment

On 31 March, an official side event of the CPD in New York brought together experts and officials from the UN, aid agencies and civil society organisations to discuss "new priorities for investing in population and development." It was sponsored by the Guttmacher Institute and UNFPA.

Participants discussed the best ways to target funding to achieve the ambitious promises laid out in the ICPD PoA and the MDGs. Panelists included Mr Stan Bernstein, Senior Policy Adviser and Coordinator, ICPD at 15, UNFPA; Ms Helga Fogstad, Team Coordinator, MCNH, Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad); Mr Scott Radloff, Director, Office of Population/Reproductive Health, Global Health Bureau, United States Agency for International Development (USAID); Ms Barbara Hendrie, Counsellor, Development and Human Rights, UK Department for International Development (DFID); and Ms Susan Cohen, Director of Government Affairs, Guttmacher Institute. They discussed areas in which their donor agencies can make the most strategic contributions, and how the top donors can complement and coordinate their funding priorities. In keeping with the framework of the ICPD PoA, the conversation focused on investments in sexual and reproductive health and the linkages between investing in women and social and economic development. ■

Advancing Women's Health and Rights in MDG Framework

With support from the Government of Norway, Ipas organised a panel presentation and discussion on "advancing women's reproductive health and rights in the MDG framework" on 31 March during the 42nd session of the CPD. It sought to inform CPD delegates and observers about actions being taken and still needed to achieve women's reproductive health and rights.

Ms Jackie Edmond, the Chief Executive of New Zealand Family Planning and the New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development, moderated the discussion. Panelists included Ms Barbara Crane, Executive Vice President in charge of Technical Leadership and Advocacy at IPAS; Ms Helga Fogstad, Coordinator of Maternal, Newborn and Child Health at the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation; Ms Debra Jones, Director for Global Advocacy at Family Care International (FCI); Ms Gladys Melo Pinzon, International Programme Director at Catholics for Choice; and Mr Sandeep Prasad, Human Rights Advisor for Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD).

Ipas is an international organization that works around the world to increase women's ability to exercise their sexual and reproductive rights, and to reduce abortion-related deaths and injuries. A report on the panel is available. Please contact Ms Maria de Bruyn at debruynm@ipas.org. ■

UNFPA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER POLICIES IN EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

Parliamentarians and Advocates Review Gender Policies

Over 100 parliamentarians and government officials from selected CIS countries and Turkey, as well as UN experts, gathered in Ashgabat, Turkmenistan, from 13-14 April for an international conference on "International Standards for Gender Policies." The conference was organised by the UNFPA Regional Division for Eastern Europe and Central Asia in cooperation with the Government of Turkmenistan. The conference enabled policymakers in the region to share best practices and experience and significant achievements in gender equality, women empowerment and the overall implementation of the Convention on Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) and the ICPD Programme of Action (ICPD PoA).



From left: Mr Richard Young of UNFPA and Ms Shirin Akhmedova of Turkmenistan

The opening of the conference was chaired by Ms Shirin Akhmedova, Director of the Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan, and was addressed by Mr Nikolai Botev, Sub-Regional Director of UNFPA for Central Asia; Dr Pinit Kullavanijaya, Senator of Thailand and Secretary-General of AFPPD; and Mr Richard Young, UN Resident Coordinator and UNFPA Representative in Turkmenistan. Also in attendance were high-level representatives from UNFPA country offices.

Mr Nikolai Botev highlighted the near universality of CEDAW and urged governments to exchange experience of national efforts to mainstream gender into legislation and national programmes in health and rights. He also urged governments to use the Beijing Platform for Action as a basic framework for national implementation of gender programmes and policies to ensure that women are empowered to benefit from and contribute to national development as equal partners of men.



Senator Dr Pinit Kullavanijaya, Thailand

Senator Dr Pinit Kullavanijaya highlighted the centrality of Gender in all AFPPD programmes, which have promoted gender-responsive policies at country-level and supported legislations to eliminate violence against women in countries such as Cambodia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. He noted that one-third of AFPPD's executive members are women parliamentarians, including Ms Aitkul Samakova, MP of Kazakhstan. He reiterated AFPPD's commitment to engage Central Asian parliamentarians at regional and international level.

Mr Richard Young credited the ICPD for creating "a climate of legitimacy, for gender movements and gender reform, which otherwise would have taken much longer to achieve." However, he warned that the momentum has slowed globally, especially in maternal health and the provision of reproductive health services and care.

Gender Legislation, Empowerment & Reproductive Health

Ms Navamane Ratna Patten, UNFPA CEDAW Expert, gave an overview of regional specific CEDAW implementation.



Ms Navamane Ratna Patten, UNFPA

She noted that CEDAW obligates States to observe the principle of non-discrimination and gender equality by integrating it in the highest law of the land. National legislative framework with appropriate measures in place for its proper functioning can be a powerful vehicle for the advancement of women. Gender equality laws send a strong signal about the political will of the Government to prohibit discrimination against women.

Ms Lyudmila Amanniyazova, Deputy Director of the State Statistics Committee of Turkmenistan, discussed the role of gender statistics in her country. Turkmenistan, she says, places great importance on gender statistics and observes international standards and adopts UN methodology on the collection of gender statistic. Gender statistics are important because they inform political leader and support legislative changes to promote gender equality and women's empowerment at the country-level.



Ms Lyudmila Amanniyazova, Turkmenistan

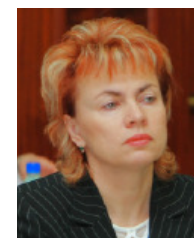


Ms Elena Pozdorovkina, UNFPA

Ms Elena Pozdorovkina, UNFPA Regional Advisor for Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA), led a panel discussion on mainstreaming of gender in legislation in the region, followed by a discussion of strategies for women's empowerment facilitated by Ms Koh Miyaoi, UNDP Regional Gender Advisor for EECA. Ms Luz Angela Melo, UNFPA Technical Advisor on Human Rights, discussed gender and rights for reproductive health.

Gender-Responsive Policies

The first day of the conference ended with a knowledge-sharing workshop on the "successes and challenges for developing and implementing gender-responsive and gender-specific legislation." Case studies were presented on Azerbaijan, Moldova, Russia, and Turkey. The workshop was facilitated by Ms Navamane Ratna Patten of UNFPA and moderated by Ms Mariana Shchotkina, First Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Protection, Republic of Belarus.



Ms Mariana Shchotkina, First Deputy Minister, Belarus

Gender-responsive legislation gives equal acknowledgment and protection to women and men, recognizing their paid and unpaid contributions to society. Ms Patten said that such legislations must guide decision-making to ensure that related policies and government programmes facilitate equal participation in society, equal realization of rights and equal access to the benefits of development.

Strategies to Empower Women

The second workshop the following morning focused on strategies

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UNFPA INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON GENDER POLICIES IN EASTERN EUROPE & CENTRAL ASIA

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Ms Koh Miyaoi, UNDP

for women's empowerment with case studies on Azerbaijan, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Ukraine. It was facilitated by Ms Koh Miyaoi of UNDP, and moderated by Mr Yuriy Syzenko, Deputy Minister for Family, Youth, and Sport, Ukraine.

Presenters stressed that empowerment of women will contribute to improved development results such as improved reproductive health, reduced maternal and child mortality, reduced violence against women and girls, reduced rates of HIV/AIDS, improvement of the root inequalities, reduction of poverty and stronger families and communities.

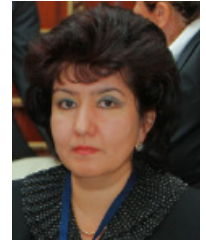
Reproductive Health and Rights

The third workshop addressed the gender and rights for reproductive health with case studies on Georgia, Kosovo, Tajikistan and



Mr Yuriy Syzenko, Deputy Minister, Ukraine

Turkey. It was facilitated by Ms Luz Angela Melo of UNFPA, and Ms Shelly Natasha Abdool, WHO Technical Adviser on Women, Gender and Health, and moderated by Ms Mahbuba Nuritdinova, Chair of the Committee on Social Issues, Healthcare, Family and Ecology of the Parliament of Tajikistan. Women and men must be equal partners in reproductive health. To ensure such strong partnerships, noted the presenters, it is essential to recognize that women and men have equal rights to this area of health and equal responsibilities.



Ms Mahbuba Nuritdinova, MP, Tajikistan

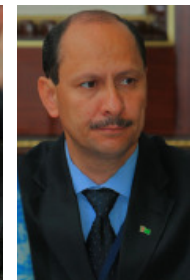
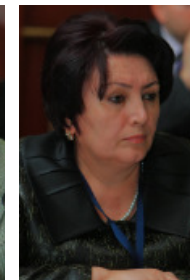


Ms Luz Angela Melo, UNFPA

After discussing a Plan of Action, Ms Shirin Akhmedova delivered the closing remarks. The UNFPA organising team led by Ms Jennet Appova, acting Assistant Representative and National Programme Officer of UNFPA-Turkmenistan, as well as resource persons, made the meeting a success. ■

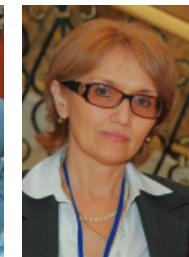
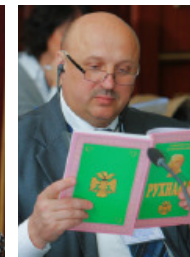


From left: Ms Jennet Appova, National Programme Officer and acting Assistant Representative, UNFPA-Turkmenistan; Ms Zuhra Akhmedova, Assistant Representative, UNFPA-Tajikistan; Mr Fuad Aliev, Assistant Representative, UNFPA-Uzbekistan; Mr Alexander Kossukhin, Assistant Representative, UNFPA-Kazakhstan; Mr Nikolai Botev, UNFPA Sub-Regional Office Director for Eastern Europe and Central Asia



From left: Mr Orazmura Orazkychev, MP, Turkmenistan; Ms Jyldyz Rahimdinova, MP, Kyrgyz Republic; Ms Kimatgul Aliberdieva, Deputy Chair of the Committee on Women and Family Affairs, Government of Tajikistan; and Mr Nurmukhamet Amanepesov, Deputy Minister for Health and Medical Industry of Turkmenistan

From left: Ms Maral Paltaeva, MP, Turkmenistan; Ms Atazhanova Shemshat, National Institute of Democracy and Human Rights under the President of Turkmenistan; Mr Yagmur Nuriyev, Director of the Institute of State and Law under the President of Turkmenistan



From left: Mr Aleksandr Gorbenko, Gender Equality Project Manager, UNFPA-Ukraine; and Ms Shelly Abdool, Technical Advisor, WHO HQ, Geneva

From left: Mr Aleh Vialichko, Head of the Standing Commission on Health, Physical Education, Family and Youth Affairs, House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus; Mr Matthew Kahane, UNFPA-Uzbekistan Country Director a.i.; Ms Gozel Hojaeva, Project Associate on Safe Motherhood, UNFPA-Turkmenistan; and Ms Jennet Shihmuradova, Project Associate on Advocacy, Youth and Gender, UNFPA-Turkmenistan

Decriminalisation of Drug Use a Key Component in Fight Against HIV/AIDS

Over 1,000 people from 80 countries participated in the 20th International Harm Reduction Conference from 20-23 April in Bangkok, Thailand. This year's theme was "Harm Reduction and Human Rights." It aimed to enable the exchange of knowledge about new scientific research and evidence, raise awareness of human rights issues, engage the widest possible range of stakeholders, and enhance advocacy and capacity for harm reduction interventions. The conference was organised by the International Harm Reduction Association with support from a large number of civil society organisations, foundations and UN agencies.

Recognising the importance of the law in enhancing the response to the AIDS epidemic and drug problem, AFPPD, with support from UNAIDS, organised a parliamentarians' panel on "decriminalisation of drug use." It was chaired by Dr Pinit Kullavanijaya, Senator of Thailand and AFPPD Secretary General. The panelists were Dr La Ode Ida, MP and Deputy Speaker of the Upper House, Indonesia; Dr Donya Aziz, MP and Chair of HIV/AIDS Parliamentary Committee, Pakistan; Dr Ouk Damry, MP, Cambodia; Mr Douandy Outhachak, MP and Chair of the Socio-cultural Committee of the National Assembly, Laos; and Dr Prasada Rao, Director of UNAIDS Regional Support Team for Asia and the Pacific. The session drew close to 200 participants.

Dr Kullavanijaya lamented the fact that drug dependence is still not recognized as a health problem in many Asian countries, thus enabling the continuation of social stigmatization and discrimination against drug users. He noted that attempts to treat and prevent drug use through tough penal sanctions for drug users fail because they are not informed by scientific evidences. The cost of prevention and treatment, he says, is much lower than indirect costs by untreated drug dependence. He called on governments to consider drug use a health care condition and treat drug users in the health care system rather than in the criminal justice system where possible.

Non-Punitive Approach

Dr Donya Aziz, MP of Pakistan believes that decriminalisation of drug use remains a sensitive issue in many Asian countries not least because many lawmakers are not well informed of the proven benefits of harm reduction and a rights-based, non-punitive approach to drug use. She urged civil society to further engage parliamentarians and provide them evidence-based information and statistics so as to enable them to take more proactive legislative actions.

Enabling Legal Environment

Both Dr Laode Ida, MP of Indonesia and Dr Ouk Damry, MP of Cambodia commented on the need for a balanced approach in the war on drug that can effectively reduce illicit drug use and drug dependence while protecting the health and rights of drug users. Dr Ida noted harm reduction remains a controversial approach in Indonesia and needs time to gain public acceptance. They support expanding harm reduction programmes to allow greater access and creating an enabling legal environment.

Dr Douandy Outhachak, MP of Laos cited laws in his countries that



Mr Douandy Outhachak,
MP, Laos

promote treatment and health services to drug addicts. He said the injection drug use is a new phenomenon in Laos so Laotian parliamentarians have little experience in this regard. Therefore, the government of Laos is paying more attention to the trend of the epidemics in neighboring countries and raising awareness in Laos, with preventive measures targeting high-risk and vulnerable groups.

Access to Justice and Community Empowerment

Dr Prasada Rao of UNAIDS emphasized the importance of parliamentarians' involvement in rights-based responses to HIV/AIDS. Law essentially encompasses written and traditional law, its enforcement, and access to justice. Parliamentarians can play an important role in all three of these processes, of which empowering communities to access justice is most critical. Empowerment of community involves informing members of their rights and laws; mobilising around rights issues; enabling members to be able to seek legal aid, litigate and get redressal; and allowing them to negotiate with parliamentarians.



Dr Prasada Rao, UNAIDS

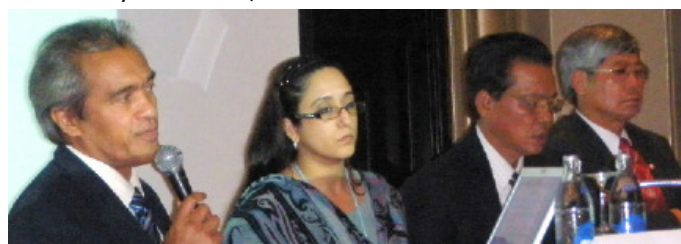
Dr Rao urged law enforcement officers, police and prison staff to show sympathy and understanding and not block access to HIV-related services, and the judiciary must not discriminate against people living with HIV in the dispensation of justice and should work to protect the rights of women and children.

Dr Rao recommended proper monitoring of legislation or law reform, which is a tremendous challenge that parliamentarians must rise up to. "Bad law," he said, "is easier to make than good law." Therefore, community empowerment is the most effective way to create an enabling environment to facilitate access to services to people living with HIV and most-at-risk populations.

In closing, Dr Rao recommended a rights-based approach to HIV/AIDS that guarantees equality and non-discrimination in programmatic expenditures and applications; meaningful participation of affected populations; and monitoring and evaluation disaggregated by sex, age, rural/urban status, economic status, etc.

Response Beyond Borders

In another session hosted by Response Beyond Borders on the Asian Consultation on HIV Prevention related to Drug Use, Dr Kullavanijaya also spoke on parliamentarians' response to drugs and HIV. He urged greater advocacy to inform parliamentarians of the linkages between drug use and HIV/AIDS. He reviewed his own efforts within the Thai Senate to encourage deliberation and learning of drug use and AIDS topics and to set up a sub-committee on population and development. ■



From left: Dr Laode Ida, MP and Deputy Speaker, Indonesia; Dr Donya Aziz, MP, Pakistan; Dr Ouk Damry, MP, Cambodia; and Sen. Dr. Pinit Kullavanijaya, Thailand

Parliamentarians Discuss Drug Use and HIV Prevention

The South Asia Regional Workshop on the prevention of HIV related to drug use was held in Kathmandu, Nepal, from 17-18 March. The workshop was organised by Response Beyond Borders and Youth Vision Nepal. AFPPD organised a parliamentarians' session with support from UNAIDS.

The parliamentarians' session featured Mme Chong Eng, MP, Malaysia; Mr Ali Mohamed, MP, Maldives; Dr Rajitha Senaratne, MP and Minister of Construction and Engineering Services, Sri Lanka; and Dr Pinit Kullavanijaya, Senator of Thailand and Secretary-General of AFPPD, who also addressed the opening session. The panel was moderated by Mr Patrick O'Gorman, Consultant with the Asian Harm Reduction Network (AHRN). Mr Manohar Bhattarai, Acting Secretary-General of the Constituent Assembly of Nepal, also attended.

The parliamentarians agreed that they shoulder a major responsibility to provide leadership and assert political will to change public attitude and influence decision-makers to adopt a more rational and less punitive approach to drug users and support access to treatment and care. ■



Clockwise from top left: Mr Ali Mohamed, MP, Maldives; Sen. Dr Pinit Kullavanijaya of Thailand and AFPPD Secretary-General; Mr Patrick O'Gorman, Consultant, Asian Harm Reduction Network; Mme Chong Eng, MP, Malaysia; and Dr Rajitha Senaratne, Minister of Construction and Engineering Services, Sri Lanka

NEW ZEALAND PARLIAMENTARIANS' GROUP ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

NZPPD Highlights Population Linkages with Development and Climate Change



Dr Jackie Blue, MP, New Zealand

New Chairwoman Elected

The New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development (NZPPD), an AFPPD member, held its first meeting of 2009 in February, where Dr Jackie Blue, National Party MP, was elected as the new NZPPD Chair, and Ms Steve Chadwick, Labour Party MP, was elected as Vice-Chair at the meeting.

Dr Jackie Blue brings valuable experience to the group, including her medical background as a reputable breast physician and her time as Opposition Spokesperson for Women's Affairs. Ms Chadwick also brings a wealth of expertise, including eight years as former NZPPD Chair. Ms Chadwick was also the immediate former chair of AFPPD's Standing Committee on Women.

On 20 March, in her address to the opening of the symposium on "Eliminating

World Poverty: Global Goals and Regional Progress" in Parliament, Dr Blue emphasised that "population issues, including sexual and reproductive health and rights and gender, are vital if we are to achieve any development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals."

Letter to President Obama

Dr Jackie Blue and Ms Steve Chadwick have written to President Barack Obama welcoming the landmark lifting of the Mexico City Policy. The letter draws attention to the plight of women in the Pacific who lack "access to quality and comprehensive information and services about planning their families, giving birth safely and having healthy relationships."

The letter praises the repeal of this "global gag" policy as a major step towards recognising and addressing these basic human rights.

Population and Climate Change

Dr Blue and Ms Chadwick briefed their colleagues on 9 April as follow-up to their NZPPD written submission to the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) Review Committee, emphasising that gender, sexual and reproductive health, and other population issues need to be at the heart of addressing climate change.

"There is increasing recognition around the world that these issues are vital to

address in mitigating and adapting to climate change. New Zealand cannot afford to ignore this," says Dr Blue.

The NZPPD submission states that there are fundamental and powerful differences in the way women and men contribute to climate change, are impacted by it, their capacities to cope and adapt, and their access and participation in decision making on climate change.

NZPPD also states that there is a clear body of evidence that investing in sexual and reproductive health and rights is an indispensable strategy for achieving environmental sustainability. For example, providing sexual and reproductive health information and services that give people a choice to decide on the number and spacing of children they want can help balance the needs of the population and the pressure on their environment and natural resources.



Ms Steve Chadwick, MP, New Zealand

"As we continue and develop our focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights, evidence supports the conclusion that this will have positive effects on the environment," says Ms Chadwick. ■

Thai Senate Holds Hearing on Drugs and AIDS

Thailand's Senate Committee on Public Health under the chairmanship of Dr Anan Ariyachaipanich organised the first ever committee hearing on drugs and AIDS on 7 April. It was attended by members of the committees, officials of the Ministry of Public Health of Thailand, representatives from UN agencies including UNAIDS, UNODC, WHO, and HARP, as well as NGOs and a large number of people affected by drug use and HIV. AFPPD helped organise the hearing.

Senator Dr Pinit Kullavanijaya of Thailand, Secretary General of AFPPD, concluded the hearing which produced many suggestions and among them was the need to humanise laws on drug and to decriminalise drug use. This recommendation was widely appreciated by all concerned. ■

THE PACIFIC COMMUNITY

Pacific Parliamentary Champions Trained on Media Advocacy

Four parliamentary champions in the Pacific region on HIV/AIDS and youth participated in a training workshop on using the media as a tool for advocacy. Facilitated by Representatives from UNFPA and the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), the workshop was held at SPC's regional office in Suva, Fiji from 31 March to 3 April.

The champions were endorsed last year at conferences of the Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development (PPAPD) and the Forum Presiding Officers and Clerks (FPOC). The HIV/AIDS champions are Ms Francesca Semoso, Deputy Speaker, Bougainville House of Representatives, and Mr John David Tangi,

Leader of the House, Parliament of the Cook Islands, who conducts HIV/AIDS advocacy in the Pacific and internationally.

Mr Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Samoa and Vice Chair of AFPPD, and Mr Atapana Siakimotu, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly of Niue, were similarly endorsed as champions for youth advocacy.

One of the aims of the workshop is to help the representatives break the silence on important issues surrounding HIV/AIDS and youth so that they can also advocate better policies, laws and practices to overcome challenges. ■



Mr Tolofuaivalelei Falemoe Leiataua, Speaker of Legislative Assembly, Samoa



Mr Atapana Siakimotu, Speaker of Legislative Assembly, Niue



Ms Francesca Semoso, Deputy Speaker of Lower House, Bougainville



Mr John David Tangi, Leader of the Upper House, Cook Islands

DISASTER REDUCTION

MPs Explore Gender Angle of Disaster Reduction

The International Conference on Gender and Disaster Risk Reduction was held in Beijing, China from 20-23 April. It explored how women and men can participate equally in driving early warning systems, risk assessments, preparedness exercises and national and local plans to implement disaster risk reduction policies. More than 200 participants, among them ministers and parliamentarians from 50 countries, attended the three-day conference. The conference was organised by the All-China Women's Federation and the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UNISDR) Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland.

"Women can be an incredible asset and make a real difference in saving lives if they can play a bigger role in preventing and managing disasters" says Ms Margareta Wahlström, Assistant Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction. ■

Chinese MP Urges China to Tackle Ageing Population

China will pay dearly if it does not act now to build up an old-age social security system, as its population aged 80 or above will hit 83 million by 2050, a population expert has warned. "The proportion of working people to retirees is still low at the moment, if we missed the chance, we will pay a dear cost," Ms Ma Li, vice director of China Population and Development Research Center, told Xinhua on 10 March.

China formally became an aged society in 2000, when the population aged 60 or above accounted for 10 percent of its 1.3 billion people. With an annual growth rate of 3.7 percent, China's population aged 80 or above will reach 22 million by 2020, and 83 million by 2050, according to Ms Ma, a deputy to the 11th NPC, China's legislative body (She is also a member of its Education, Science, Culture and Public Health Committee, an AFPPD national committee). In contrast to developed countries, China entered the aged society while it is still a developing country, said Ms Ma, on the sidelines of the NPC annual session in Beijing. "China is not yet ready for the aged society. It does not have a complete old-age social security system. There are not enough resources. Fiscal support is scarce. And the risk is ever rising," said Ms Ma.

She said China must act now to set up an old-age social security system that covers both rural and urban population. Such a system should be based on the care of the old people by their families, backed-up by community-level services networks and with old folks homes as a supplement, she said. Ms Ma stressed that China has the capacity to establish a proper old-age social security system. "China's population and economic structures and its level of urbanization is well beyond the stage at which developed countries began to establish old-age social security systems for their rural populations," she said. (Xinhua News) ■



Ms Ma Li, MP, China

South-South Cooperation Reviewed

Bali—Partners in Population and Development (PPD) is an organisation that promotes South-South cooperation, based in Dhaka, Bangladesh. PPD organised its International Programme Advisory Committee meeting in Bali, Indonesia, from 19-20 May.

The meeting was opened by Dr Sugiri Syarif, chairperson of the National Family Planning Coordination Board (BKKBN), Government of Indonesia and also addressed by Mr Rabbi Royan, Senior Technical Adviser of Population and Development Branch of UNFPA; Mr Harry Jooseery, Executive Director of PPD; Mr Jyoti Singh, PPD Permanent Observer to the UN in New York; and Dr Haryono Suyono, former Coordinating Minister for Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation of Indonesia.

Other participants included Mr Shiv



From left: Mr Jyoti Singh, PPD Permanent Observer to the UN; Dr Sugiri Syarif, Chair of BKKBN, Indonesia; Mr Harry Jooseery, Executive Director of PPD; and Mr Rabbi Royan, Senior Technical Advisor at UNFPA

Khare, Executive Director of AFPPD; Ms Elizabeth Lule, Manager of the AIDS Campaign Team for Africa, World Bank; Dr W. Henry Mosley, Professor, Department of Population, Family and Reproductive Health, John Hopkins University, USA; Dr Malcolm Potts, Bixby Professor, Population and Family Planning, UC Berkeley School of Public Health, USA; Professor Onuora Nwuneli, Professor of Mass Communication, Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Nigeria; Dr K.S. Seetharam, Consultant, Thailand; Dr

S.L.N. Rao, Consultant, New York, USA.

The advisory committee reviewed the programmes of PPD and also advised on programme direction. It was pointed out that South-South cooperation has gained new meanings and momentum in the new economic environment and PPD has a valuable role to play. It was also announced that PPD will organise an African parliamentarians meeting on South-South collaboration. ■

EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARY FORUM

MPs Visit Africa to Discuss Malaria and Population

Cameroon

From 28 March until 04 April, the European Parliamentary Forum (EPF) organised a parliamentary study tour to Cameroon to explore the new methods and strategies in place to tackle the disease. The study tour was hosted by the Cameroon Coalition against Malaria.

The delegates included Ms Katia Della Faille, MP, Belgium; Ms Maria Rosa Fortuny i Torroella, MP Catalan; Ms Heli Järvinen, MP, Finland; Mr Fazil Mustafayev, MP, Azerbaijan; and Mr Serban Radulescu, MP, Romania.

The MPs visited malaria projects, including Global Fund projects, highlighting various prevention strategies, accessibility of drugs and treatments, as well as a visit of research labs.

Burkina Faso

From 5 to 11 April, EPF, jointly with Equilibres & Populations, organised another high-level Parliamentary study tour to Burkina Faso to look into Burkina Faso's demographic burden, and enabled the Delegation to visit programmes, assess needs and remaining challenges in the fight for access to care, gender

equity, institutional efficiency and aid effectiveness.

The delegates included Ms Danielle Bousquet, MP, France, Ms Martine De Maght, MP, Belgium; Senator Francesca Marinaro, Italy; Ms Genevieve Gaillard and Mr Philippe Tourtelier, MPs, France; Ms Thérèse Frösch, MP, Switzerland; Ms Antonia Garcia Valls and Carmen Monton Gimenez, MPs, Spain.

Both delegations met with Government officials, including parliamentarians, as well as with UN Agencies, local embassies and main donor representatives. (EPF) ■

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