



Publication of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

3rd Asian Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference - Colombo

“Culture of Men” Needs to Be Changed

Discussing Women Empowerment and MDGs



L. to R: Sen. Claire Moore, Hon. Sumedha G. Jayasena, Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Hon. Ferial Ashraff, and Ms. Imelda Henkin

Eighty-nine women and men parliamentarians from 19 countries in Asia and the Pacific as well as Central Asia, along with observer parliamentarians from Europe and Africa, attended the 3rd Asia-Pacific Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference, on “Engendering MDGs: A Challenge”, from August 2 to 3, in Colombo, Sri Lanka.

Women parliamentarians, in adopting one-year agenda for work, asked that male parliamentarians should be educated and motivated on gender and women empowerment issues. It was also the wish of the women parliamentarians that the AFPPD pursue special gender issues more vigorously. They recommended a survey of legislators on eliminating of violence against women in the region. Women parliamentarians from Central Asia wanted women advocacy programme in their region and also recommended satellite sessions of women parliamentarians at the 2006 International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI 2006), to be held in Bangkok.

Male parliamentarians from selected countries who participated in the conference gave a message which stated that all efforts need to be made to change “culture of men” in order that women would achieve the desired level of equality and equity. The AFPPD and the Sri Lankan Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development jointly organized the conference, in cooperation with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Health Ministry of Sri Lanka, and the Government of Japan. The theme of the conference revolved around the needs and challenges for women, especially women leaders, to assume leadership roles in the unified efforts to check poverty and to promote gender equality and reproductive health to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Hon. Ferial Ashraff, Sri Lankan Minister of Housing and Construction Industry, presided over the opening ceremony on behalf of the Chief Guest Hon. Mahinda Rajapaksa, Prime Minister of Sri Lanka, who had left for Saudi Arabia to attend King Fahd's funeral. She delivered the Prime Minister's speech which stated that the conference would be a good opportunity for lawmakers to learn from the experiences of different countries in the region with regard to gender-related policies and programmes, especially in the fields of health, education, and employment. The Prime Minister's statement also highlighted the development of gender-equality policies and advocacy programmes in Sri Lanka where a bill on women's rights and gender-equality policy was being formulated.



Without women empowerment, poverty cannot be removed - Ms. Imelda Henkin

Ms. Imelda Henkin, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, said during the opening ceremony that the devastation of the December 26 tsunami had critical effects on the lives and well-being of women in the region and relief efforts must address the particular needs of women and girls, including access to reproductive health information and services, psychosocial counseling, and protection from gender-based violence. On the MDGs, she noted that the promotion of gender equality and empowerment of women would be the key to the achievement of all eight goals in the MDGs since gender discrimination was one of the main obstacles to poverty reduction. Ms. Henkin added that removing this hurdle would be tantamount to “unleashing a tremendous amount of human capital” and warned that, without the political will and resources for women’s health and rights, the world would miss the opportunity to end poverty by 2015 for millions of human beings.

Gender equality in Sri Lanka - Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva

Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Sri Lankan Minister of Healthcare and Nutrition, said that gender equality was advanced in several sectors in the country, from judiciary to foreign service, although there were constraints in implementing programmes. He cited successes in women’s health promotion programmes, especially in maternal health and child care. The Ministry recruited 2,200 midwives last year to ensure that every area of this country, for every 5,000 persons, would have one midwife.

Unless mainstreaming of women in development is realized, a substantial development may not be achieved - Mr. Yoshio Yatsu

Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP from Japan and AFPPD Chairman, said that the AFPPD had already started working with its member parliamentarians to be part of the delegation to UN Special General Assembly on MDGs in New York in September. The AFPPD also called for the inclusion of the promotion of reproductive health as one of the targets set out under MDG 5 – Improved Maternal Health, Mr. Yatsu said. He added that the poor situation surrounding women, that still needed to be improved, could lead to the world phenomenon of womanization of poverty. Therefore, the empowerment of women is vital to poverty alleviation, he said.



Mr. Yoshio Yatsu

Protection from gender-based violence is needed - Ms. Imelda Henkin

The first session was marked by Ms. Henkin’s keynote speech on the topic, entitled “MDGs: What Do They Mean for Women?”. She addressed the important relationship between MDGs and women in achieving safety, freedom from discrimination, and healthy reproductive lives. Gender equality is important, not only as a goal in itself but also as a path towards achieving the other goals. She added that an effective stimulator for gender equality is reproductive health and rights. Reproductive health care and education would increase women’s autonomy and widen their choices in life. Reproductive health care practices would include safe motherhood, voluntary family planning, the prevention and treatment for Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), especially HIV/AIDS, and protection from gender-based violence. When women’s reproductive rights are promoted and protected, they would have freedom to participate equally in the society. Ms. Henkin said that the political participation of women, at the national, sub-national, and community levels, would also empower women and women’s issues in the policy-making arena; gender equality and women empowerment were the keys to the achievement of the MDGs; and all parliamentarians must be a powerful force for the change.



L. to R.: Ms. Imelda Henkin, Mme. Pang Lijuan,
and Hon. Mrs. Birute Vesaite

Message from IEPFPD - Hon. Birute Vesaite

Hon. Birute Vesaite, MP from Lithuania and Executive Committee Member of the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPFPD), spoke on behalf of the IEPFPD and outlined the organization’s priorities in line with the MDGs, namely better policies on sexual and reproductive health, better allocation of international development budgets for population issues, and rights protection from conservative forces. This should be noted that eight MP delegates participated on behalf of the IEPFPD.

A panel discussion on “Parliamentarians’ Understanding of MDGs and Their Impact on Women” featured three parliamentarians from Southeast and Central Asia. Congresswoman Josefina Josen, from the Philippines, shared her country’s experiences in the pursuit of the goals set in the MDGs. The Philippine House of Representatives had established a special committee on the MDGs for monitoring and tracking MDGs targets, she said. Senator Siw Chun AP Eam, from Malaysia, said that Malaysia had a strong political will and commitment to providing more to those whose needs are more, particularly women of child-bearing age and children. She cited the continuous improvement in the coverage of service delivery as a main factor in reducing the maternal and infant mortality rates. Ms. Dinar Nuketayeva, MP from Kazakhstan, said that the Kazakh government was working towards a strategy on gender equality for 2005 to 2015, especially in the fields of employment, health protection, education, and youth and child policies. Several programmes against STDs, drug abuse, tuberculosis, and other socially important illnesses as well as the fight against family violence and trafficking in women and girls would also be supported by the government, she said.

Women and poverty - Prof. Alejandro N. Herrin

Professor Alejandro N. Herrin, who teaches economics at University of the Philippines, spoke on the topic of "Women and Poverty: Do MDGs Matter?". He pointed out that the promotion of gender equality should be a life-long process in which the gain achieved in one stage of life would not disappear in subsequent stages.

Sex ratios get adverse - Ms. Kiran Bhatia

Ms. Kiran Bhatia, Advisor to the UNFPA/CST for South and West Asia, spoke on the topic, entitled "The Silent Tsunami: Sexual and Gender-based Violence - a Violation of Women's and Girls' Right to Health". She said that violence against women happened in all phases of life and, in the recent years, the emerging problem was the declining sex ratios due to female infanticide and feticide. She mentioned that the sex ratios in South Asia were adverse for women and India had the lowest ratio. Recent studies showed that the situation was not dictated by poverty since there were also systematic killings of girls in India's rich states, she added.



L. to R: Dr. Sujatha Samarakoon and Dr. Hiranthie Wijemanne

Dr. Sujatha Samarakoon, Consultant Venereologist at the National STD/AIDS Control Programme in Sri Lanka, spoke on women's vulnerability to HIV/AIDS. She said that biological, social, and economic factors contributed to women's HIV/AIDS vulnerability. Migration, prostitution, and trafficking also aggravated the problem, she added. Dr. Hiranthie Wijemanne, Member of the National Committee for Women of Sri Lanka, gave a presentation on gender discrimination in education and employment. She said that both the percentage of girls who did not attend primary schools and female unemployment rates demonstrated that there were considerable gender gaps in South Asia. Dr. Wijemanne emphasized that the focus on education in the MDGs would be pivotal to the efforts to empower women's rights, especially in the field of employment.



L. to R: Dr. Oli Ahmad Bir Birbikram and Dr. Alejandro N. Herrin



L. to R: Rep. Lorna Sylvero and Ms. Kiran Bhatia

The needs for culture-specific SRH promotion programmes - Ms. Madhu Bala Nath

Ms. Madhu Bala Nath, Regional Director of IPPF in South Asia, gave her insight into the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights in achieving the MDGs. She said that policy makers should be aware of other dimensions of poverty – apart from lack of income. She noted that the objective of the fight against poverty would be the reduction in deprivation of capabilities and capability poverty measure would be a useful index. She also raised a number of questions drawn on the lessons of sexual-health promotion in Africa. The promotion programmes should be customized to each particular culture and, at the same time, ready to break existing stereotypes in the society, she said.



L. to R: Sen. Mohamed Jin Bin Samsudin Datuk Jins Shamsudin and Ms. Madhu Bala Nath

Political and social leadership of women - Ms. Chandaraka Pandey

Ms. Chandrakala Pandey, MP from India, said that Asia and the Pacific was the region where the largest number of women were elected as leaders but political participation was lagging in several countries in the region. She also discussed India's efforts in promoting women in political leadership at different levels across the society.

Forces behind discrimination in Central Asia - Ms. Doina Bologna

Ms. Doina Bologna, Representative a.i. of the UNFPA in Uzbekistan, shed light on the situation of women's participation in Central Asia. She said that there were three forces behind the women's discrimination in the region, namely the patriarchal culture, the Soviet system, and the transition economy. According to the analyses of recent elections

in the region, women could not capitalize on the available opportunities because of the deep-rooted stereotypes on their passive role and lacks of political experience and financial support.

Party politics is responsible - Ms. Susan Deacon

Ms. Susan Deacon, Member of the Scottish Parliament and representative of the IEPFPD, said that political parties in the United Kingdom were trying to increase the number of women in the parliaments and now women constituted 40 percent of the MPs. She added that party politics might not allow the parliamentarians from different parties to work together.



L. to R: Ms. Susan Deacon, Hon. Ferial Ashraff, Mrs. Chandrakala Pandey, and Ms. Doina Bologna



UNFPA's role in tsunami assistance - Ms. Lubna Baqi

The panelists in a session, which surveyed the impact of emergencies on women, provided the accounts of their experiences in the aftermath of the tsunami in Sri Lanka. Ms. Lubna Baqi, UNFPA Representative in Sri Lanka, said that the understanding on gender dynamic would make the disaster-relief efforts much easier and more effective as men and women had different roles and needs. She added that the UNFPA had launched several gender-specific assistance programmes for women and girls after the tsunami, to ensure that their vulnerabilities and needs would not be neglected. Such programmes included providing critical reproductive-health supplies for safe deliveries and providing personal hygiene products to the displaced women and girls. Dr. Sepali Kottegoda, Co-director of the Women and Media Collective, Sri Lanka, said that the staggering losses of women's lives due to the tsunami underscored the fact that, in some countries, being a woman could be the reason why someone did not have certain life-saving skills, including swimming.



L. to R.: Dr. Sepali Kottegoda, Dr. Virapong Skolkitivat, and Ms. Lubna Baqi



L. to R.: Hon. Teresa Caeiro, Ms. Raa Fat Bayat, and Ms. Metiria Turei

The session on what roles and responsibilities parliamentarians should assume to mobilize resources for the MDGs drew on the parliamentarians' experiences in the policy-making process. Ms. Metiria Turei, MP from New Zealand, said that the country's proportional system of government enabled the policy-formulation process to incorporate inputs from different parties and agencies across the society and this characteristic was also evident in New Zealand's international development aid policy that was focused on the targets set in the MDGs. Hon. Teresa Caeiro, MP from Portugal, urged her fellow parliamentarians to fulfil their political and social responsibilities in mobilizing resources for the MDGs. She noted that the parliamentarians must be the role models for pursuing MDGs, adding that the problems now should be attributed to the lack of law enforcement, not lack of legislation. Senator Claire Moore, from Australia, representing the Chair of the AFFPD Standing Committee on Women, outlined four major commitments shared by the participating parliamentarians. The commitments included to go back to their home countries and to run information in various ways about the MDGs and about what happened at the conference; to work with the local media to disseminate related information to the public; to work through the parliamentary processes to achieve the passing of relevant legislation; and to talk with the people at the grass-roots level and the youth about the related issues. The conference adopted a Statement of Commitment which was based on the personal commitments handwritten by participating parliamentarians. Hon. Sumedha G. Jayasena, Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, Ms. Imelda Henkin, and Senator Claire Moore spoke at the closing ceremony.



L. to R.: Hon. Sumedha G. Jayasena, Senator Claire Moore, Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva, and Ms. Imelda Henkin at the closing ceremony



L. to R.: Hon. Nimal Siripala de Silva presents memento of appreciation to Mr. Neil Datta



Parliamentarians from China



Parliamentarians from India



UNFPA Asia-Pacific Director Meets Philippine and Vietnamese Parliamentarians

During his recent trip to the Philippines and Vietnam, Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director, Asia Pacific Division, UNFPA, met the elected officials of the Philippines Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), on August 3, 2005, at the Philippine Parliament, in Manila. Mr. Aziz and Dr. Zahidul Huque, UNFPA Representative to the Philippines, also met House Speaker Jose De Venecia and congressmen and congresswomen on the Special Committee on the MDGs. Representative Mario "Joyo" Aguja gave a presentation on the function, legislation agenda, and accomplishments of the Committee on MDGs. In Vietnam, he also met Chair and members of the Vietnamese Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (VAPPD). Mme. Nguyen Thi Hoai Thu, who is also the Chair of the Social Affairs Committee of the Vietnamese Parliament, and Mr. Ian Howie, UNFPA Country Representative, were also present.



L to R: Speaker Jose De Venecia, Mr. Sultan Aziz, Rep. Mario "Joyo" Aguja, Rep. Jose Carlos Lacson, Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel, and Mr. Romeo Dongeto



L to R: Rep. Jose Carlos Lacson, Rep. Risa Hontiveros-Baraquel, Dr. Zahidul Huque, Speaker Jose De Venecia, Mr. Sultan Aziz, Rep. Emmylou Talino-Santos, and Rep. Janette Garin

Thai Senator Speaks on HIV/AIDS at GTZ Symposium in Berlin



Senator Jon Ungphakorn of Thailand far left, made a forceful plea for better resources on HIV/AIDS at a GTZ symposium, entitled "HIV in dialogue", on August 20, 2005, in Berlin, Germany. The AFPPD sponsored his attendance. Senator Ungphakorn, Thailand's well-known advocate for the rights of people living with HIV/AIDS, is the recipient of the 2005 Ramon Magsaysay Award.

Stronger Leadership Needed to Conquer AIDS, Says Dr. Thoraya A. Obaid

The efforts to prevent HIV, which are now insufficient, needed brave and committed leadership to boost HIV prevention in the AIDS programmes around the world, according to Dr. Thoraya Ahmed Obaid, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). "Unless greater action is taken, millions more people will become infected with HIV by the end of the decade," Ms. Obaid warned during a round table on HIV/AIDS prevention, which was part of a special one-day UN General Assembly meeting to review progress and to discuss the challenges posed by HIV/AIDS, on June 2, 2005, at the United Nations in New York. She added that, without a significant reduction in new infections, it would not be possible to keep pace with the number of people with HIV/AIDS in need of treatment. "We must scale up prevention with, and within, treatment and care," she said.

Ms. Obaid noted that fewer than one in five people at risk had access to these interventions although there were a growing number of proven prevention strategies. "As a result, close to five million people were newly infected last year alone. Therefore, expanding the delivery of life-saving prevention information, education, and services is absolutely critical," she said. Ms. Obaid added that the world must ensure universal access to education and sexual and reproductive health services and rights to meet the goals and targets in the MDGs. "If we focus like a laser beam on scaling up education, information and services, we will reach those in need," Ms. Obaid said, adding that, "If we keep the promises we have made, we will achieve the goals we have set for ourselves. We will combat HIV and AIDS. We will restore hope where there is now despair and we will replace scepticism with confidence."



IPPF ESAOR Aims to Translate Words into Action

AFPPD at IPPF Advocacy and Alliance Building Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia



L. to R.: Dr. Raj Karim, IPPF ESAOR, Ms. Sumie Ishii, JOICEP, and Dr. G. Giridhar, UNFPA/CST

The quest for Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) in the Asia-Pacific region has built up momentum as the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) organized the IPPF East and Southeast Asia and Oceania Regional (ESAOR) Advocacy and Alliance Building Meeting, held from June 1 to 4, 2005, in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. Advocates and experts from countries in the region, including AFPPD Executive Director Mr. Shiv Khare, discussed and shared their success stories and experiences on issues such as access to SRH, investing in SRH rights for young people, advocacy policy changes, integrating SRH and HIV/AIDS, networking collaboration, partner perspectives, and protecting women's health. The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt, and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) constituted the central framework of the discussions.

Dr. G. Giridhar, Director UNFPA/CST Bangkok and UNFPA Representative to Thailand, provided his insight into the linkages between the ICPD and the MDGs. He outlined how the ICPD could contribute to meeting each of the MDGs. Dr. Raj Karim, Regional Director, IPPF - East and Southeast Asia and Oceania Region, highlighted the results from the roundtable discussions held in Kuala Lumpur and London last year – 10 years after the ICPD. She said that the current meeting would be the time to translate the statements of intent into action.

Dr. Ravindran Jegasothy, Senior Consultant Obstetrician, Seremban Hospital, Malaysia, spoke on "Access to Sexual and Reproductive Health Services, Safe Motherhood, and Newborn Health". He argued that to optimize the use of the resources, to upgrade the infrastructure, to increase awareness, to contain poverty, to pay attention to the marginalized groups, and to revise the law were on the list of what health workers could put forward to achieve SRH rights. Ms. Salanieta Makutu, Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji, described the success stories of the Association's advocacy programmes, concluding that the successes in overcoming ignorance of sexuality in youths and gatekeepers can be achieved by improving and strengthening access to SRH education through collaboration with all stakeholders. Mr. Peter F. Chen, Adviser on Adolescent Reproductive Health, UNFPA/CST Bangkok, spoke on "Investing in Sexual Reproductive Health and Rights of Young People: Options and Opportunities". He said that, in a world where nearly half of the population is younger than 25 years old, ignoring the needs of young people would carry significant risks, not only for their lives, but also for national and global stability, security, and socio-economic development.

One of the important sessions was networking and collaborations and opportunities for NGOs' participants. Its contributors were Mr. Shiv Khare, from AFPPD, Ms. Sumie Ishii, Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICEP), and Ms. Johanna Wicks, Program Coordinator, Pacific Sexual Health and Family Planning, Australia. Other speakers at the three-day meeting included representatives from planned parenthood and SRH rights agencies from countries and territories in the region, including Cambodia, Hong Kong, Myanmar, Singapore, South Korea, Vietnam, etc. In addition, Dr. Raj Karim, Regional Director of IPPF ESAOR, emphasized that the IPPF would like to extend its alliance with regional NGOs, parliamentarians, and the UNFPA.

Renewable Energies to Save the Day

Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Conference on Renewable Energies in Gifu City, Japan



Parliamentarians gather at the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Conference on Renewable Energies

Parliamentarians from across the Asia-Pacific region came up with new steps to enlist greater supports for renewable energies at the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Conference on Renewable Energies (APPCRE), held in cooperation with the AFPPD, on June 4, 2005, in Gifu City, Japan. Fifty-eight parliamentarians from 22 countries and territories in Asia and the Pacific, including Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP, Japan, and Chairman of AFPPD, adopted the declaration that contains commitments and proposals that promote renewable energies in the region. They also acknowledged that population growth was detrimental to the environment. The AFPPD was the conference's co-sponsor.

The Declaration of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Conference on Renewable Energies sought to enlist support for renewable energies from various agencies at the international, regional, and national levels. The participants agreed that the promotion of renewable energies in the region could contribute to the efforts to tackle various challenges such as the prevention of global warming, security of energy supplies in local areas, avoidance of conflicts over energy, sustainable development, and positive inter-operation of the environment and economy. The parliamentarians who participated in the conference also acknowledged that the efforts to promote renewable energies would highlight the fact that renewable energies brought various benefits to the society and the environment and agreed that education and dissemination of knowledge in the region on renewable energies and environmental protection should be promoted in line with the initiatives which was promulgated by the UN Decade of Education for Sustainable Development. They also recognized that, in promoting renewable energies in the Asia-Pacific region, poverty and environmental degradation harmed the region and affirmed that the transfer of renewable energy technology from industrialized countries to developing countries should be facilitated in accordance with the principle of common-but-differentiated responsibility, taking into consideration the diverse situations and different capacities of the countries and areas in the Asia-Pacific region. The legislators agreed to petition their respective governments to commit themselves to designating funds for the establishment of a sustainable funding mechanism for renewable energy projects, including funds for Official Development Assistance. They also agreed that they would encourage international development financial institutions, including the World Bank, the Asia Development Bank, and the Japan Bank for International Cooperation, to increase the percentage of their investments in renewable energy projects. A new international instrument which aims at promoting renewable energies should be prepared. The declaration also envisioned that the distribution of renewable energies should become more effective as they were the most efficient generators in rural and non-grid areas. They would also strive for the enhanced interrelationships between their respective countries and areas in order to promote international cooperation between legislators in renewable energies in the Asia-Pacific region. The participants also noted that they would examine policies to promote renewable energies in their respective countries and areas as they are the driving force in this process and, for effective implementation, they would establish a parliamentarian group on promoting renewable energies within their respective parliaments. Considering rising energy demand in the region, renewable energies should be given the first priority and countries avoid excessive dependency on fossil fuel and nuclear power, the parliamentarians noted. The APPCRE was the follow-up of the International Conference for Renewable Energies, held in Bonn, Germany, in June 2004. The International Parliamentary Forum on Renewable Energies was convened for the first time in association with the 2004 International Conference for Renewable Energies and four Japanese parliamentarians who participated in Bonn took the initiative to organize the Asia-Pacific Conference in Japan. The AFPPD sponsored the parliamentarians to attend. The conference aimed to raise the issue of linkage between energy, environment, and population growth.



Empowering Societies to Cope with Pitfalls in Migration

UNESCAP-UNFPA-IOM-AFPPD Regional Seminar on the Social Implications of International Migration in Bangkok, Thailand



L. to R: Mr. Ghazy Mujahid, Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Mr. Shigeru Mochida, Ms. Keiko Osaki, Ms. Irena Vojackova-Sollorano, and Ms. Thelma Kay

Parliamentarians, government officials, NGO workers, and UN officials from 12 countries in Asia met in Bangkok, Thailand, from August 24 to 26, 2005, to discuss social implications of international migration. The regional seminar, held at the UN Conference Centre, was organized by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the AFPPD. Migration has been a burning issue for the international community and a regional seminar that involves policy makers in the issues on social implications of international migration was an appreciable initiative by the Population and Social Integration Section of the UNESCAP Emerging Social Issues Division.

The AFPPD supported the participation of Mr. Mohammad Amzad Hossain Sarker, MP from Bangladesh; Mr. N.K. Premachandran, MP from India; Mrs. Dra. Chairun Nisa, MP from Indonesia; Hon. Tan Bon You, MP from Malaysia; Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Senator of Thailand and Secretary-General of AFPPD; and Mrs. Tuenjai Deetes, Senator of Thailand. Mr. Shigeru Mochida, UNESCAP Deputy Executive Secretary, who presented UNESCAP Executive Secretary Mr. Kim Hak Su's statement, said that a greater proportion of international migration in the Asian and Pacific region was within East and Southeast Asia and the seminar would be a forum for identifying emerging trends in migration, analyzing their implications, and promoting regional consultations on migration issues.

Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit delivered a statement on behalf of Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP from Japan and Chairman of AFPPD. The statement indicated that the AFPPD would pursue the issues of migration more proactively in the future as AFPPD did not give due emphasis to the issues which require greater transnational and regional cooperation. The statement also noted that migration issues were directly related with population-growth problems.

A more inclusive perspective on migration issues and SRH for migrants

Mrs. Irene Vojackova – Sollorano, IOM's Chief of the Mission and Representative for Southeast Asia, Bangkok, said that the governments should adopt a more inclusive view on the migration issues as they needed to be aware of the social and economic implications of the issues. Mr. Ghazy Mujahid, Advisor on Population Policies and Development of UNFPA/CST, Bangkok, pointed out that migration in a globalizing world could lead to fundamental tensions, both within and between countries. He added that the UNFPA had advocacy programmes for the reproductive rights of migrant workers and for providing them with necessary reproductive health services. Ms. Maruja Asis, from Scalabrini Migration Center, Quezon City, the Philippines, provided a survey on the trends of migrations in East and Southeast Asia.

Migration trends and patterns in South Asia - Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque

Mr. Md. Shahidul Haque, Regional Representative for South Asia, IOM, Bangladesh, focused on migration trends and patterns in South Asia. He noted that migration flows from Afghanistan, Bangladesh, and Sri Lanka were among the largest in the world, while India and Pakistan hosted a large number of migrants. He added that high levels of irregular migration, along with intensified smuggling and trafficking in persons and transnational crimes, such as drug trafficking and terrorism, had posed increased challenges to Governments in the region. He argued that migration management did not tackle all forms of migration in a coordinated manner.



Statistics are vital to exploring migration dynamics - Ms. Keiko Osaki

Ms. Keiko Osaki, Chief of the Population and Social Integration Section, Emerging Social Issues Division, UNESCAP, Bangkok, in her presentation, entitled “International Migration: Challenges for Measurement”, discussed the absence and inadequacy of international migration statistics. As the issue of international migration had gained greater importance as a policy agenda item, the demand to quantify the volume and scope of international migration had increased. However, the statistics on the dynamics of the phenomenon were still far from complete. The available data were often not sufficient in terms of comparability, availability, and quality. Ms. Osaki stressed that, if fully utilized, existing data could still be a powerful tool for exploring migration dynamics. However, the primary responsibility to produce statistics was still with the countries. Therefore, she called for strengthening the data producing capacity of relevant national offices. It was also crucial that governments would have a stronger commitment on improving and sharing data.

Actors and processes of international migration in Asia and the Pacific - Mr. Manolo Albella

Mr. Manolo Abella, former Chief of International Migration Programme, the International Labour Organization (ILO), presented a paper on “Social Issues in the Management of Labour Migration in Asia and the Pacific”. He observed that labour migration within the region was characterized by the prevalence of contract labour migration, the importance of private fee-charging job brokers in organizing migration, the active involvement of governments in regulating, and, in some cases, promoting labour migration. Ms. Nicola Piper, Senior Research Fellow, Asia Research Institute, National University of Singapore, presented a paper on “Transnational Politics and the Organizing of Migrant Labour in Southeast Asia: NGO and Trade Union Perspectives”. Ms. Sureeporn Punpuing, Associate Professor, Institute for Population and Social Research, Mahidol University, Thailand, summarized a report on the situation of international migration in Thailand.

International organizations and international NGOs tackle the fallouts from migration

Mr. Ibrahim Awad, Chief, International Migration Programme, International Labour Organization (ILO), Geneva, spoke on “Labour Migration Policies and Programmes”. Dr. William Aldis, World Health Organization (WHO) Representative to Thailand, and Dr. Jaime Calderon, IOM Project Coordinator, Bangkok, made a joint presentation on the collaboration among WHO, IOM, and the Thai Ministry of Public Health on the migrants’ health issues. Dr. Pornchai Suchitta, UNFPA, Bangkok, described the UNFPA project on improved access to reproductive health services for border populations. The project was being implemented by the World Vision Foundation of Thailand (WVFT) in the Thai provinces of Ranong and Phuket. The project activities included providing quality, gender-sensitive, and integrated reproductive health services through stationary and mobile clinics; capacity building for community, sub-district, and district health service providers; training of peer educators and midwives; and producing and disseminating information materials in local languages to the target groups. The UNFPA had also received funding for a project to provide general and reproductive health care services through existing service delivery points and UNFPA-funded mobile clinics for about 10,000 migrant workers, their family members, and local population in the areas affected by the tsunami. The project was also designed to promote community participation, advocacy, and partnership with civil society and other development partners.

Linkages between international migration and goals and targets in the MDGs

Mr. Dang Nguyen Anh, Head, Department of Population Studies, Institute of Sociology, Hanoi, Vietnam, spoke on “Enhancing the Development Impact of Migrant Remittances and Diaspora: The Case of Vietnam”. Ms. Erica Usher, Head, Strategic Policy and Planning, Migration Policy, Research and Communications, IOM, Geneva, presented a background paper on the linkages between migration and several MDGs goals.

Gender sensitivity needs to be incorporated into migration policy - Ms. Jean D’Cunha

Ms. Jean D’Cunha, Officer-in-Charge, East and Southeast Asia Regional Office, UN Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Bangkok, spoke on gender and migration. She argued that the mainstream discourse and interventions on migration were not normally gender-responsive and that they lacked a rights-based sustainable-development orientation. Gender-sensitive and rights-based perspective would recognize that migrant population consists of men, women, boys, and girls. It would address similarities and differences in the migration experience of men and women and would recognize the greater disadvantage of women and girls, which was rooted in socio-economic marginalization.

Children’s vulnerability in the tide of international migration

Mr. Jerrold W. Hugué, Social Affairs Officer, Population and Social Integration Section, Emerging Social Issues Division, UNESCAP, and Ms. Sureeporn Punpuing presented a paper on child migrants and children of migrants in Thailand. Mr. Ravi Cannetta, Child Protection and Trafficking Officer, East Asia and Pacific Regional Office, UNICEF, explained that the underlying causes of the vulnerability of children to being trafficked included poverty, minority group status, lack of quality education, gender inequalities, and political instability. Mr. Phil Marshall, Technical Director, Regional Cooperation to Prevent People Trafficking, Cambodia, also elaborated on some distinctions between trafficking and smuggling of migrants.

Recommendations for Action

The seminar concluded with a set of recommendations for action that stated that migration should be viewed as an important, positive, contributing factor to development and to the achievement of the MDGs. Key components in the recommendations included regional cooperation on migration, national policy development, and studies and research. The detailed recommendations are available on the UNESCAP’s website.



World Bank's Emphasis on Parliamentarians' Participation

Conference on Mobilizing Parliamentarians for Development in Vienna

Parliamentarians and heads of staff representing 25 parliamentary organizations and assemblies, along with senior officials from development agencies, think tanks, foundations and institutes, exchanged their perspectives and experiences on development issues during the three-day conference, entitled "Mobilizing Parliamentarians for Development", co-

organized by the Austria Development June 11 to 13, 2005. The conference range of issues and common agenda that agree to cooperate form an informal development. Mr. Director-General for and International Ministry of Finance,



L. to R.: Ms. Zuleikha Salim Said, PNoWB, Mr. James Ketterer, SUNY/CID, Mr. Jean-Christophe Bas, the World Bank, Mr. Shiv Khare, AFPPD, and Ms. Martha Gutierrez, GTZ

Executive Director, the World Bank, emphasized during opening dinner that parliamentarians in donor countries should generate general support for development cooperation among the general population.

Ms. Eveline Herfkens, UN Secretary-General's Executive Coordinator of the MDGs Campaign, addressed the opening dinner, urging the parliamentarians to incorporate the MDGs into their campaign platforms. She stressed that gender equality would lead to the achievement of the MDGs. Ms. Herfkens also said that what the parliamentarians could do to achieve development goals included to require government representatives to appear before parliament or relevant committees; to increase aid; to improve quality of aid; to provide debt relief; to promote trade for development; and to improve governance.

Parliamentarians can make a difference in the efforts to achieve the MDGs

A panel discussion on "Mobilizing Parliamentarians for the Millennium Development Goals" provided international and regional viewpoints on the parliamentarians' contributions to advancing the MDGs. Mr. Zia Qureshi, Senior Adviser, Global Monitoring Secretariat, the World bank, said that 2005 was a pivotal year and that MPs had a key role to play in advocating and mobilizing support for the MDGs. Mr. Shiv Khare, Executive Director of the AFPPD, outlined the significance of the legislative process in advancing health-related MDGs in Asia. He noted that Asia was still behind on the health-related MDGs and on gender equality. He also highlighted several initiatives made by the AFPPD such as a person-to-person advocacy programme and ongoing mobilization of parliamentarians with specific professional backgrounds.

Mr. Aime Damiba, Coordinator, Forum Africain des Parlementaires pour l'Education (FAPED)



Hon. Kenneth Dzirasah, MP, Ghana, PGA

spoke on the active roles of FAPED parliamentarians in promoting universal primary education in Africa, including mobilizing funds, increasing parliamentarians' capacity to be advocates for education, and playing their oversight role.

Helsinki Process recognizes parliamentarians' roles in development

Mr. Mats Karlsson, Country Director for Ghana, Liberia, and Sierra Leone, the World Bank; Ms. Heidi Hautala, MP from Finland; and H.E. Ambassador Iari Rantakari, Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Finland, presented the information about the Helsinki Process, a joint initiative of the Finnish and Tanzanian governments that aims to establish democracy

and equality in international relations. The Process encompasses three track groups, namely new approaches to global problem solving, global economic agenda, and human security. It includes all stakeholder groups and also acknowledges the parliamentarians' roles in achieving the goals and targets in the MDGs.



L. to R.: Amb. Dr. Irene Freudenschuss-Reichi, Austrian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mr. Abel Rwendeire, UNIDO, and Mr. Asger Rhyll, UNFPA

Mr. Bert Koenders, MP from the Netherlands and Chair, Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB), said that, although there were many good parliamentary organizations, the number of parliamentarians active on global issues remained low. He argued that the incentive was often weak as many of them did not believe that they would gain re-election votes by working on global issues. For PNoWB's activities, he highlighted new work to create a G8 Implementation Watch to make sure that G8 countries follow their pledges and other prominent roles of the PNoWB's regional and local chapters. Answering a question on how to popularize global issues and localize discussions from global meeting, from Mr. J.R. Nereus O. Acosta, MP from the Philippines and Deputy Secretary-General of AFPPD, Mr. Koenders said that parliamentarians needed to have faith in themselves and be willing to put development at the forefront of national debates. In the session on "How the World Bank and Parliamentarians Work Together", Mr. Ivar Slengesol, Communications Associate, Development Policy Dialogue, the World Bank; Mr. Mats Karlsson, Country Director for Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the World Bank; Hon. Norbert Mao, MP from Uganda, PNoWB Board Member, Chair, East Africa Chapter; Hon. Denis Marshall, QSO, Secretary General, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA); Mr. Nicholas Dunlop, Secretary-General, e-Parliament; and Mr. Kimmo Sasi, MP from Finland and Chairman of the Sub-Committee on International Economic Relations, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, shared their visions on the issue. Mr. Slengesol, from the World Bank, explained that the World Bank worked with parliamentarians at two levels. At the global level, the main focus is on advocacy and research while the activities at the country level are of a more operational nature.



Mr. J.R. Nereus O. Acosta



Mr. Bert Koenders, PNoWB

Mr. Ivar Slengesol, Communications Associate, Development Policy Dialogue, the World Bank; Mr. Mats Karlsson, Country Director for Ghana, Liberia and Sierra Leone, the World Bank; Hon. Norbert Mao, MP from Uganda, PNoWB Board Member, Chair, East Africa Chapter; Hon. Denis Marshall, QSO, Secretary General, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA); Mr. Nicholas Dunlop, Secretary-General, e-Parliament; and Mr. Kimmo Sasi, MP from Finland and Chairman of the Sub-Committee on International Economic Relations, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, shared their visions on the issue. Mr. Slengesol, from the World Bank, explained that the World Bank worked with parliamentarians at two levels. At the global level, the main focus is on advocacy and research while the activities at the country level are of a more operational nature.



L. to R.: Mr. Kimmo Sasi, MP, Finland, Mr. Nicholas Dunlop, e-Parliament, Hon. Denis Marshall, CPA, Mr. Kurt Bayer, Austrian Ministry of Finance, Hon. Norbert Mao, MP, Uganda, PNoWB, Mr. Mats Karlsson, the World Bank, and Mr. Ivar Slengesol, the World Bank

The session on "Mobilizing Parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS and Health" drew on the experiences of Dr. Debrework Zewdie, Director, Global HIV/AIDS Program, the World Bank; Mr. Ousmane Sane, Executive Director, JurisAIDS; Mr. Neil Datta, Secretary, Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPPFD); and Dr. Kasuka Mutukwa, Secretary General, Southern African Development Community (SADC) Parliamentary Forum. Mr. Datta reiterated that three of the MDGs were directly related to health, while many of the others related to improving and maintaining health. Around 20 percent of the global health burden is from sexual and reproductive health (30 percent for women) and 70 percent of new HIV infections were sexually



Ms. Carla Rivera-Avni, IAPG, and Mr. Neil Datta, IEPPFD



Hon. Peter Schieder, MP, Austria, Chair of Foreign Affairs Committee

transmitted. Ms. Martha Gutierrez, Head of Project, Zuleikha Salim Said, Corrodiator, Mr. James Ketterer spoke on the road after the conference to maintain the Schieder, MP, Austria, and Mr. Ian Goldin, World Bank, gave their remarks during the Carla Rivera-Avni, Exexecutive Director, Population and Development (IAPG), Ms. Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA), the PGA's international committee also participated in the conference.



Mr. Cosma Gatere and Mr. Vinay Bhargava, the World Bank

GTZ, Ms. PNoWB, Mr. Shiv Khare, AFPPD, and ahead for the parliamentarians to pursue initiative's momentum. Hon. Mr. Peter Vice President for External Affairs, the conference's closing ceremony. Ms. Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Shazia Rafi, Secretary General, and Mr. Ross Robertson, Chairman of



Brainstorming Interplay between SRH and MDGs

1st Focus Group Meeting on SRH and MDGs in Cebu, the Philippines



Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director of Asia and the Pacific,
UNFPA

L. to R.: Mr. David Melmoth, New Zealand; Ms. Lesley
Soper, New Zealand; Mr. Dang Nhu Loi, Vietnam; Ms.
Do Phuong Thao, Vietnam; Dr. Than Sina,
Cambodia

A stronger emphasis on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) should be placed in the ongoing efforts to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), said parliamentarians at a focus group meeting which was the AFPPD's new strategy to bring together a small number of parliamentarians to have more direct discussions to promote them as champions of the SRH-related issues for the MDGs. The first Focus Group Meeting SRH and MDGs was organized by the AFPPD, in collaboration with the Philippine Legislator's Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), in Cebu, the Philippines, from June 29 to 30, 2005. It was attended by around 20 parliamentarians and parliamentary officers from 14 countries, namely Australia, Cambodia, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Laos, Malaysia, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. The meeting was officially opened by Hon. Mario J. Aguja, Congressman and Vice-chairperson of Special Committee on the MDGs, Parliament of the Philippines.

Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director of Asia and Pacific Division, UNFPA, emphasized that the challenges for the parliamentarians lay on how they could work with their governments, specifically the concerned agencies, to inform them of the process of the MDGs, while delivering a clear message that investing in SRH should be a part of the comprehensive efforts for the poor. He also urged that, after five years since the MDGs had been adopted, efforts must be sustained in the remaining ten years.

What is MDGs?: Unless we invest in what needs to be done, we do not have the chance to meet the goals

Mr. Sultan Aziz provided a brief history on how the MDGs had been formulated and adopted by the United Nations and its member countries. To achieve the MDGs, it is important to recognize that each of the eight goals of the MDGs is inter-related and that developed and developing countries need to be mutually committed. His eloquent and informative remark inspired the participants and the open discussion continued for more than 90 minutes.

ICPD/ PoA and MDGs: How Are They Linked?; We are all part of the problem and its solutions

Dr. Chaiyos Kunansont, Advisor on HIV/AIDS and STIs, UNFPA/CST, spoke on how the Plan of Action that was adopted at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994 (ICPD/PoA) and the MDGs are linked. They are linked because they are about everybody's business as they both address human, social, and economic development issues. He said that everyone was part of the problem and its solutions and, in the end, stood to benefit from achieving what the ICPD/PoA and MDGs aspire. Dr. Kunansont stressed that the attainment of the ICPD/PoA and MDGs would require political commitment in such actions as setting objectives, designing work plans, and building national and local capacity in management. In addition, he emphasized that these goals and targets would only be starting points and that they would not be the final goal of a country's roadmap to success.

National Policies and Strategies Relating to MDGs; Legislators should listen and heed the people's voice

Mr. Benjamin De Leon, President, the Forum for Family Planning and Development Inc., the Philippines, presented the case study on the policies and strategies relating to the MDGs in the Philippines, specifically to goals 3 (Promote Gender Equality), 5 (Improve Maternal Health), and 6 (Combat HIV/AIDS). He explained that although there were many programmes on development, population, and MDGs related issues in the Philippines, the availability of these programmes could not account for the lack of resources that government needs to achieve the MDGs. There is a great need for the legislation of a national population and reproductive health policy that will allocate resources to SRH to provide universal access to SRH services and information.

Role of Parliamentarians in Policy and Advocacy; Leadership of parliamentarians

In this session, three speakers - Ms. Lesley Soper, Member of Parliament, New Zealand, Mr. Sultan Aziz, and Dr. Chaiyos Kunonsant, of the UNFPA - talked about health-related MDGs, respectively on MDG-3: Promoting Gender Equality and Empower Women, MDG-5: Improve Maternal Health, and MDG-6: Combat HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Other Diseases. These served as the discussion ground on the topic of the roles of parliamentarians in the advocacy for SRH. Several points raised during the discussion on the parliamentarians' roles included to legislate and monitor laws, to have influence on budget allocation on the MDGs, to make the government aware of the importance of the MDGs, and to facilitate the prioritization of policies and programmes that contribute to the targets of the MDGs. These points were reflected in the Plan of Action adopted at the end of the meeting.

MDG plus Five: Review of Progress Leading to the UN General Assembly; Need to intensify interventions on reproductive and sexual health

Mr. Shiv Khare, Executive Director, AFPPD, provided the information on the process of this year's 5-year evaluation for the MDGs and the events leading to the UN General Assembly on the MDGs. He observed that there were much more efforts needed to be done to raise awareness and to develop policies and programmes on population and development, including SRH. Therefore, he urged, considering this situation, that it was important to highlight SRH in the MDGs at the UN General Assembly on the MDGs in September.

He informed the participants about several consultations and meetings that had been and were going to take place to review the improvement and current status in achieving the MDGs. He also mentioned that several reviews had pointed out that SRH needed to be incorporated in the MDGs.

Participants discussed on strategic action required and support needed for implementation at the national and sub-national levels to achieve the MDGs and the agreed-upon Plan of Action.

This two-day focus group meeting provided the parliamentarians with an opportunity for intensive reflections on MDGs as well as an opportunity to brainstorm what they can do. This was part of the AFPPD's effort to seek parliamentarians' engagement in achieving the MDGs and also to educate and inform them about the inter-relationship among population growth, SRH, and the MDGs, to which the AFPPD has been devoting itself in the entire year of the MDGs' 5-year evaluation.



L. to R.: Ms. Gul-e-Farukhand Siddiqui, Pakistan; Ms. Maritess Pempena, the Philippines; Mr. Mahinda Yapa Abeywardana, Sri Lanka; and Hon. Junaidy Abd Wahab, Malaysia



L. to R.: Ms. Ethel Mendiola, PLCPD Staff; Dr. Ahmad Khas Ahmadi, Iran; Ms. Do Phuong Thao, MP, Vietnam; Ms. Marissa Haque Fawzi, MP, Indonesia; Ms. Ruth Irene N. Reyes, PLCPD Staff



Rescue Africa from Poverty, Parliamentarians Urges

G-8 International Parliamentarians' Conference on Development
in Edinburgh, Scotland



Japanese MPs at the conference, from L. to R., Mr. Teruhiko Mashiko, Mr. Masatoshi Wakabayashi, Mr. Shigeo Uetake, and Mr. Goshi Hosono

Nearly 80 parliamentarians from G-8, African, and European countries gathered to lay the groundwork for solutions to the development challenges facing the African continent at the G-8 International Parliamentarians' Conference on Development, on June 6 and 7, 2005, in Edinburgh, Scotland. The conference was organized by the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPPFD) and the Scottish Parliament, in collaboration with the World Bank, the Parliamentary Network on the World Bank (PNoWB), and Interact Worldwide. It sought to enable the parliamentarians and their constituents to reinforce their influence at the G-8 summit, held in Gleneagles, Scotland, in the following month.

They discussed the issues of HIV/AIDS; sexual and reproductive health and rights; supporting sustainable development and agriculture; building effective nations and good governance; promoting peace, security, conflict prevention and resolution; developing the private sector and strengthening the capacity to trade and aid; trade and debt relief; and the role of donor countries. In the Edinburgh Declaration, issued on June 7, the parliamentarians called on the G-8 nations to take action in the following six areas, namely improving the quality and quantity of aid to Africa; strengthening African capacity to benefit from the international trading system; agreeing on ways to expand debt relief; placing women's rights at the heart of development policy; addressing the specific health burdens of African countries; and strengthening partnership with African-led initiatives. Over 40 parliamentarians also signed a personal appeal to United States President George W. Bush and British Prime Minister Tony Blair on the need to take action on Africa's poverty problems. The AFPPD sponsored the Japanese parliamentarians' participation.

NZPPD Report on "Creating a Culture of Non-violence"

Ms. Steve Chadwick, MP and Chair of New Zealand Parliamentarians Group on Population and Development (NZPPD), presented a report on violence against women and children, at the Littlies Lobby Breakfast of Children's Champions, held in the New Zealand Parliament on June 8, 2005.

The report, entitled "Creating a Culture of Non-violence", is based on the results and recommendations from the open hearing into violence against women and children, held on March 7. The hearing was organized by Family Planning Association of New Zealand – International Development (FPAID) and the report was funded by the AFPPD.

Littlies Lobby is a joint initiative between the Royal New Zealand Plunket Society and the Office of the Commissioner for Children. This collaboration for children is aimed at encouraging all New Zealanders to act in ways that will ensure all children are safe, healthy, and ready to enter school at age five.



Japan Should Provide More Supports for IPPF

Dr. Steven Sinding Speaks at JFPF General Assembly



L. to R.: Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, Mr. Michihiko Kano, Dr. Taro Nakayama, Ms. Kayoko Shimizu, and Mr. Shin Sakurai

Dr. Steven Sinding, Executive Director of International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), expressed thanks for Japan's contribution on behalf of the IPPF and stressed that Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) needed to be an integral part of the pursuit of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Addressing the General Assembly of Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JFPF), held on June 23, 2005, in Tokyo, Dr. Sinding said he felt apprehensive about the fact that the words – SRH – were not included in the MDGs statements and he emphasized that the MDGs goals would not be achieved without the fulfillment of SRH.

He explained that IPPF activities, which focus on the SRH supports, were in keeping with the spirits of the MDGs. He wished that SRH topics be included in the summit in September in New York and that SRH be included in its statement. Dr. Sinding also expressed his interest in the ways in which the Japanese government had recently been showing positive attitudes towards increasing Official Development Assistance (ODA). Dr. Sinding also called for further support for IPPF activities. The JFPF General Assembly had a debriefing session on their finalized activities in 2004 and the first half of 2005. Forty-five persons, including 35 Japanese parliamentarians, attended the Assembly. Several JFPF executive members, including Dr. Taro Nakayama, Chairman, Mr. Michihiko Kano, Senior Vice Chairman, Ms. Kayoko Shimizu, Secretary General, Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, Executive Director and AFPPD Chairman, and Mr. Shin Sakurai, Vice Chairman and former AFPPD Chairman, and other members, including Mr. Yukio Ubukata, an MP who joined a JFPF study-visit programme to Cambodia, exchanged their views on the activities. In the opening address, referring to recent support from European countries to Africa, Dr. Nakayama outlined the JFPF's achievements. The JFPF had sent delegations to African countries over the past three years and they had submitted their reports, based on the on-site inspections, to the Japanese Government through the Director-General of the Cabinet. Dr. Nakayama also called for JFPF members to make further approaches to the Government to contribute to policy-making process of Japanese government. Recent activities, including APDA meeting, study-visit programme to Cambodia, the study visit to the tsunami-affected areas in Thailand, Malaysia and Indonesia, and activities undertaken within the previous several months, were also discussed. Mr. Shigeo Uetake and Mr. Teruhiko Mashiko, MPs and JFPF members, who participated in the G-8 international meeting in Edinburgh in June, gave background information on the situation of the European support to Africa and explained the importance of presenting the Japanese perspective at the G-8 Parliamentarians Meeting. The JFPF is a founding member of the AFPPD.



Dr. Steven Sinding, IPPF (file photo)

Iranian Parliamentarian Group Reconstituted

The first general assembly session of the Population and Development Fraction of the Iranian Parliament met on August 9, 2005, and received a report about the activities, plans, and future programs of Iran's population and development group. The assembly also held the election of the executive board.

New board members are Mr. Ahmad Khas Ahmadi, Chairman; Mr. Mohssen Koohkah, Vice-Chairman; Mr. Anoushirvan Mohsseni Bandpay, Secretary; Mrs. Effat Shariati Kohbanani, Treasure; Mr. Masoud Amini, Spokesman; Mr. Seyed Abdollah Hosseini, Inspector; and Mr. Mohammad Gholi Marmani, Accountant.



AFPPD at NAM Women Conference

Ms. Ramah Osman, Executive Director of AFPPD Malaysia, attended Non Aligned Movement (NAM) Ministerial Meeting on the advancement of women in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, from May 7 to 10, 2005. The meeting, organized by Government of Malaysia, debated women and economic development, women in decision-making process, women and education, health, and ICT, women in armed conflicts, and violence against women. They also discussed HIV/AIDS and women empowerment.

Norwegian Parliamentarians Visit Uganda

Three female Norwegian MPs visited Uganda on a week-long study tour of the country from September 19 to 25, 2005. The study visit was sponsored by International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) to increase awareness of sexual and reproductive health in Uganda. The objective of the visit was to learn what role the MPs could play in achieving the same high level of access and quality of sexual and reproductive health services for all Ugandans. All three MPs - Britt Hildeng, May Hansen, and Ingjerd Schou - are members of Norwegian Inter-Parliamentary Network Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, a member of the Inter-European parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPPFD). They visited a wide range of NGOs and faith-based organizations working with local communities and youth groups and issued a declaration that recognized the country's efforts to improve the quality of life of the people of Uganda, especially in the fields of sexual and reproductive health and rights. The MPs also reaffirmed the centrality of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) to achieving the MDGs.

AFPPD Parliamentarians in World Bank Study Visits

Hon. P. Komola Devi, Parliamentary Secretary to the Education Minister of Malaysia, and **Ms. Chairunnisa**, from Indonesia, joined the study visit to Ghana, organized by the World Bank and Parliamentarians Network of World Bank (PNoWB), from July 24 to 28. The PNoWB has organized parliamentarians study visits to enhance the understanding of the work of the World Bank and to review the participation process and outcome of each country's poverty-reduction strategy. Earlier study visits took place in Albania, Burundi, Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Nicaragua, Serbia and Montenegro, Uganda, Vietnam, and Yemen. Several AFPPD parliamentarians participated in most of these study visits.

Upcoming AFPPD Activities

- * The 8th triennial General Assembly of the AFPPD, November 12-13, 2005, Jakarta, Indonesia
- * Asia-Pacific Reproductive and Sexual Health Conference (AFPPD Panel of Parliamentarians), November 17-21, 2005, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia
- * The 2nd Focus Group Meeting on HIV/AIDS, December 19-20, 2005, Hanoi, Vietnam

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Editor: Assistant Editor & Layout Design:

Shiv Khare

Phermsak Lilakul

The **AFPPD Newsletter** is a sequential publication.

Copies can be obtained by contacting:

AFPPD, Phyathai Plaza, Suite 9-C,

Phyathai Road, Phyathai,

Bangkok, 10400, Thailand

Tel: (662) 219 2903 / 4

Fax: (662) 219 2905

E-mail: afppd@afppd.org

On the Web: www.afppd.org

