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FORUM NEWSLETTER

Publication of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

Parliamentarians from eight South Asian countries, along with NGO representatives, international civil society partners, United Nation's agencies and organisations, public officials and media personalities attended the workshop on Parliamentary Advocacy for the Prevention of Violence Against Women (VAW) held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, on the 18th and the 19th of March, 2003. The workshop deliberated the South Asian situation in relation to violence against women and the constitutional and legislative measures to eliminate all violence against women in South Asia. The participants shared experiences and examples of advocacy initiatives for legislation, and compared existing legal measures to combat VAW in South Asian countries. They identified gaps in legislation and implementation of laws on VAW, addressed issues related to support services (including health)

for victims of violence and dealt with mobilisation of communities to address VAW. Last but not least, the role of the media in arresting VAW was debated.

The workshop was organised by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the Parliament of Bangladesh, and UNFPA Bangladesh and UNFPA/CST Nepal. Barrister Muhammad Jamiruddin Sircar, the Honourable Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, inaugurated the workshop. Other speakers at the inaugural session included Barrister Moudud Ahmed, Honourable Minister for Law and Parliamentary Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, Mrs. Khurshid Zahan Haque, Honourable Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Government of Bangladesh, Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD, Secretary General, AFPPD, Ms. Imelda Henkin, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA, Mr. Kazi Rakibuddin Ahmed, Secretary, Bangladesh Parliament, and Ms. Suneeta Mukherjee, UNFPA Representative, Bangladesh.

The workshop focused predominantly on existing concerns in the region that while many countries have enacted legislation, formulated policies, and implemented programmes on gender empowerment and the safeguarding of the rights of women and children, these have not been

Lack of Effective VAW Legislation Implementation Cause for Concern in South Asia

Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Violence Against Women Dhaka, Bangladesh



L. to R: Mr. Kazi Kakibuddin Ahmed - Hon. Barrister Jamiruddin Sircar - Hon. Khurshid Zahan Haque - Ms. Imelda Henkin - Minister Moudud Ahmed

totally effective nor acted as succour to the women in South Asian countries. Laws to combat VAW and implementation of these laws is crucial if we are to see the eradication of VAW. Parliamentary advocacy can ensure linkages and effective action through law enforcement authorities and concerned institutions, which will lead to practical remedying of the problems related to VAW.

Barrister Muhammad Jamiruddin Sircar, Speaker of Bangladesh Parliament made it very clear to participants that if VAW is to be tackled successfully then there are four points that

must be considered and taken into hand. "The legal aspect of VAW and the implementation of laws is crucial to its eradication," he said, "social aware-

ness of VAW is necessary from the village level and onwards, education stressing VAW as a violation of another person's human dignity is vital, and social security must accompany campaigns against VAW." Barrister Sircar said that legal provisions already exist in the Constitution of Bangladesh and therein it is clearly stipulated that all citizens are equal. He went on to cite relevant clauses and then proceeded to discuss them in detail. "MPs cannot ignore the issue of VAW as women's empowerment is essential to societal and economic development.



Barrister Muhammad Sircar

Many Elements Fuel the VAW Crisis

Ms. Imelda Henkin, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, felt that the Dhaka meeting was a sequel to the Ottawa Conference on Population and Development held in 2002 where one hundred and thirty MPs from all over the world reaffirmed their commitment to advancing gender equality, empowerment of women and eliminating discrimination and VAW. "VAW," she said "is a threat to development and to health. It has assumed epidemic proportions in the form of honour



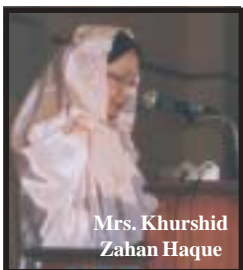
Ms. Imelda Henkin

killings, acid burning, dowry death, selective abortion, rape, domestic violence, and early marriage - the recent resurgence in religious extremism has made matters worse. Poverty, cultural values, weak legislation, and poor enforcement all fuel the crisis."

In conclusion she stated "We have to constantly remind ourselves that gender inequality, which is the root of gender violence, is neither inherent nor inevitable. It can be changed by human beings through equitable policies, laws, and greater social awareness, mobilisation and behaviour change."

Cross-Cultural Exchange Highly Advantageous

The Bangladeshi Minister for Women and Children's Affairs and sister of Prime Minister Khaleda Zia **Mrs. Khurshid Zahan Haque** chaired the inaugural session. She pointed out that cross-cultural exchanges between parliamentarians



Mrs. Khurshid Zahan Haque

can only be beneficial and enriches understanding in regard to laws and policies pertaining to discrimination against women. She said "though a partnership between NGOs and the Government, the Bangladesh Ministry is committed to improving women's status." She mentioned a recent march, sponsored by the Government, which was organised

in order to raise awareness regarding women's rights. She spoke of the implementation of a pilot project entitled 'One Stop Crisis Centre' initiated by the Ministry, and explained that the project aims to improve the quality of services available to victims of VAW and enhance effectiveness in investigation of VAW cases. "Medical, legal and policy assistance are among the services offered by the 'One Stop Crisis Centre,'" she said.

Parliamentarians Have a Heavy Responsibility Vis a Vis VAW



Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD

Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD, Secretary General of AFPPD gave a brief description of AFPPD and announced that the Asian Forum will provide any support necessary for legislative advocacy and action at the national or local level. "Parliamentarians have a heavy responsibility," she said "and we must work sincerely. These meetings should not be viewed as a visit to yet another country, but a new

milestone to cover. AFPPD has now started a 'Report Card Programme' for each parliamentarian who attends an AFPPD-organised event and expresses a desire to work further for the cause. We now have committed parliamentarians in many countries and it is through their dedication and interest that the ICPD PoA is being pushed forward."

Barrister Moudud Ahmed observed that despite women's traditionally submissive role in Asian society, Bangladeshi women play a positive role in increasing food production,

population control and literacy, and are active in the political arena. However, Mr. Ahmed agreed that there is a lot to be done to address VAW, which is rampant across South Asia. "The laws are there, but laws alone are not enough to combat VAW." He declared. "With a combined effort and the launching of a social movement against all forms of violence against women, substantial success could be achieved in a relatively short period of time."

Mr. Kakibuddin Ahmed, Parliamentary Secretary of the Parliament of Bangladesh gave a brief review of the work of the Parliament and then told participants that VAW is prevalent in every society. Overnight solutions leading to the eradication of VAW should not be expected, he said, but the Violence Against Women Workshop held in Bangkok in June 2001 and now the Dhaka workshop are steps in the right direction.



Ms. Suneeta Mukherjee

Ms. Suneeta Mukherjee, UNFPA Representative, Bangladesh gave the vote of thanks and assured participants that UNFPA would do its very best to support the enhancement of the status of women in South Asia.

Violence Against Women in South Asia

Chaired by Ms. Anisa Ahmed, Minister of Women and Children Affairs of the Maldives, session one focused on situation analysis of VAW in South Asia and a paper was presented by Ms. Ruchira Tabassum Naved from ICDDDB, the Centre for Health and Population Research, Bangladesh. Ms. Geetanjali Singh from UNIFEM, Delhi, was discussant.

South Asia Home to Some of the Worst Gender-Based Violence in the World

Ms. Naved gave a very comprehensive review of VAW in South Asia and focused specifically on Bangladesh, India, Nepal, and Sri Lanka, indicating the impact of VAW on society, underlying causes and linkages with other areas as well as providing an insight into what government agencies and NGOs are doing to eliminate VAW. According to Ms Naved, violence against women in South Asia can start as early as prenatal age, and discrimination can begin right from childhood and adolescence. At reproductive age, many women endure a number of abuses: physical, psychological, sexual and economic. Domestic forms of violence against women and girls widely persist in South Asian countries, including Bangladesh, where husbands are the most common perpetrators of VAW. Domestic violence is still regarded as a private matter and therefore many excuses are made to conceal it. "The rates of both physical and sexual violence experienced by women

34 Million Friends Campaign Approaches \$1 Million

UNFPA recently announced that more than 100,000 Americans have pitched in to raise \$1 million for UNFPA after Washington cut off support for the agency. In addition, Agence France Presse reported that Mr. Timothy Wirth, President of the United Nations Foundation, announced a grant of \$250,000 to help towards their second million dollars.



at reproductive age are strikingly high both in Dhaka City and rural Matlab in Chandpur,” Ms. Naved revealed. “A recent study found that most of the perpetrators of physical violence are relatives of the victim.”

Sexual Harrassment Rife in South Asia

Another recent study conducted in Pakistan by Alliance Against Sexual Harassment at the Workplace (AASHA 2002) found that 58 percent of nurses faced sexual harassment by patients, co-workers, doctors or relatives of patients, and that young nurses were more vulnerable to it.

The study also indicated a high prevalence of sexual harassment of women working in offices. Some 93 percent of women working both in private and public sectors interviewed had experienced some form of harassment, mostly by their boss or senior colleagues. The study also observes that the problem of sexual harassment is acute among rural wage workers, domestic workers in urban areas and garment workers.

In Bangladesh, high rates of sexual abuse has been recognised among girls employed as domestic workers. A study by the NGO, “Breaking the Silence” found that employers’ sons had abused 13 percent of the victims.

“Violence may have a direct impact on a woman’s reproductive and sexual health. Physicians have recorded some of the reproductive health problems inflicted by incest, which are, anal and vaginal laceration, sexually transmitted diseases and early childhood pregnancy. The mental health consequences of VAW include fear, anxiety, fatigue, post-traumatic stress disorder, and sleeping and eating disturbances. Suicidality is also an important psychological consequence of violence.” She concluded.

L. to R: Ms. Ruchira Naved - Ms. Geetanjali Singh



South Asian Woman A ‘Non-Person’

Ms. Geetanjali Singh of UNIFEM, the United Nations Women’s Fund, Delhi, pointed out that the distinctive feature of VAW in South Asia is its intensity. “To be a woman in South Asia is to be a non-person” she stated. According to Ms. Singh, so called gender neutrality is among the factors responsible for violence. Gender-based violence, however, is now emerging from the silence, which enshrouded it, and is finally entering public discourse. Unfortunately matters such as marital rape or incest still remain taboo. Ms Singh linked the issue of VAW with the process of conflict and peace. VAW is one of history’s great silences. Though endemic at all times, it is intensified in periods of conflict and war. The presence of arms escalates and legitimises VAW. In addition, the resurgence of religious extremism

fundamentalism in all regions of South Asia with its narrow definition of the woman’s role has resulted in attitudes conducive to VAW.

“Mechanisms for engagement with the community have to be piloted more vigorously.” Ms. Singh Continued. “This is partly because the community (family networks, neighborhood networks, organised groups etc.) is the first sight of response for women facing violence. Building the capacities of community structures that can support women is critical. This has to be accompanied and supplemented by responsive institutional machinery. In some countries, national level data on VAW and its various dimensions are absent.”

Legal and Constitutional Responses to Violence

The second session reviewed constitutional and legislative measures to eliminate VAW and was chaired by Mr. Lakshamn Singh MP India and Vice Chair of AFPPD. A paper was presented by Prof. Savitri Goonesekera, Consultant Sri Lanka, and Advocate Ms. Sigma Huda was discussant.

Prof. Goonesekera explained that South Asian Constitutions follow the Anglo American tradition and contain basic provisions on human rights providing the ideological basis for protecting women against violence. The provisions, however, refer to the civil aspects of human rights and socio-economic rights are referred to only in relation to ‘State Policy’. This results in vagueness where the socio-economic rights of women are concerned. Thus none of the Constitutions in South Asia adopt a holistic approach and fail to recognise the universality and interdependence of civil/ political and socio-economic rights. Sri Lanka has tried to redress this, but the amendments have not yet been sanctioned in Parliament. These changes (ensuring women’s access to education, health and economic opportunity) are necessary for preventing violence. The gap above has sometimes been addressed by judicial activism in higher courts and Prof. Goonesekera cited some specific cases to illustrate her point. Incorporating socio-economic rights by constitutional amendment can be difficult and proactive judicial decisions can help out in this regard.



“Lawmakers and parliamentarians have a special role and responsibility in contributing to the strengthening of laws and legal controls on violence against women in South Asia,” declared Prof. Goonesekera. “Lawmakers are partners in initiating law reform, in monitoring law enforcement through critical debate within and outside parliament, and in allocating budgets and resources for law enforcement.”

Prof. Goonesekera then proceeded to bring up the crucial issue of state violence and complicity of the state in VAW. “All the Constitutions contain clauses which can be used to seek redress for state/state-sponsored violence though that has not prevented these acts from going unpunished. Most countries in South Asia, like the rest of the globe, experience intense conflict situations and there is ample evidence of torture, rape, and harassment with some form of state sanction.”



She then highlighted the impact of legislation on VAW based on her cross-national review and showed how crucial such legislation and its implementation can be. Prof. Gonneseera astutely explained the prevailing situation in South Asia with regard to constitutional rights of women and emphasised the problematic relationship between state and family laws. "The problem with the criminal law procedure is that it is deeply embedded in its colonial roots – there is some 'tinkering' but structures remain the same to date, the procedures are 'woman unfriendly' and the issue of VAW is prone to be trivialized in the judicial system as a whole."

How Much Knowledge on VAW Do Parliamentarians Have?

Advocate Sigma Huda, Bangladesh, discussant of the session, pointed out that awareness of laws relating to violence against women among parliamentarians was not sufficient. "We need to know just how much parliamentarians know about the priorities to check violence against women," she said. She also mentioned a number of laws, including the recently formulated Acid Control Act. "After the formation of the Acid Control Act last year, we have noticed a significant decrease in the number of acid attacks on women and girls this year," she said. Advocate Sigma Huda also emphasised the need to provide training to law enforcement personnel, including police, to deal with cases relating to violence against women.

Panel Discussion on VAW by NGO Reps and Media Persons



L. to R: Mr. Deepak Gupta, Moderator - Mr. Wasim Zaman, Chair of session - Ms. Bandana Rana - Mr. Mahfuz Anam - Ms. Aushree Mishra

The first to speak in the NGO and Media representatives panel was Ms Bandana Rana of Nepal. She said that the purpose of the meeting was to raise issues and initiate discussion on VAW. Saathi, the group she is involved with, has worked on VAW since 1992 and focuses on the silent issue of domestic violence. She felt society has a long way to go yet. In this regard, she felt the media must be tapped to enhance public awareness, the role of youth is crucial: they have to be socialised at an early stage, and finally men should be more involved in the process.

Ms. Anushree Mishra, from India said that the media, as such, couldn't bring about change directly. The organisation she represents, PANOS, provides fellowships for journalists. This enhances their journalistic skills vis-à-vis gender. The media fellowship programme addresses VAW issues in a sensitive manner, and sensitive reporting and confidentiality is ingrained into those who are trained under the programme.

Mr. Deepak Gupta of India, who is working on drug-related programmes, comes in contact with politicians, civil society and media personnel in the course of his work. He feels that the media sensationalises news because that sells. "Parliamentarians can have a critical role as they are so

sought after by the media; they can decide on what stories they give," he said.

Mr. Mahfuz Anam, a journalist from Bangladesh, gave a mordant speech on the unsatisfactory role of MPs once they are in power. He felt that the workshop was a wonderful initiative as parliamentarians are losing their reputation, particularly in Bangladesh. "No MP had made a worthwhile speech in Parliament on the subject of VAW," he said. "The parliamentarians seldom, if ever, do their homework and just utter generalities." Mr. Anam opined that gender is a 'social' issue not just a 'woman's' issue.

In the open discussion that followed the panel discussion, one of the Bhutanese delegates felt that it is not possible for the media to go 'in depth' into VAW problems. "One could consider a network between MPs and the media personnel," the delegate said. A Sri Lankan delegate felt parliamentarians should be trained in gender issues. An MP from Bangladesh, in response to Mr. Anam's strong speech, said parliamentarians work under many constraints, which should be recognised. One of the Iranian delegates felt the media has an important role in educating men and women in VAW issues. Mrs. Suneeta Mukherjee, UNFPA Representative Bangladesh said, that VAW should be viewed as a community responsibility as at present it is seen as a personal matter in a family.

Parliamentarians' Perspectives on VAW



L. to R: Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan, MP Bangladesh - Hon. Sarder Mohd Yakub, Deputy Speaker of the Pakistan National Assembly - Ms. Paviitra Wanniarachchi, MP Sri Lanka - Ms. Chandrakala Pandey, MP India

The session was chaired by Hon. Sarder Mohd Yakub, Deputy Speaker of Pakistan National Assembly. The panellists included Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan, MP from Bangladesh, Dr. Chandrakala Pandey, MP from India and Ms. Paviitra Wanniarachchi, MP from Sri Lanka.

Ms. Wanniarachchi opened the discussion by saying that parliamentarians in any country, whether in the government or in the opposition, have a role to play on important issues such as VAW. As concerned citizens representing the people, they can take a common stand and agree to address the problems of VAW. Women in South Asia suffer from violence because their dignity and rights as equal citizens is not recognized in families and communities. In Sri Lanka, there is a great deal of information on gender-based violence. Successive governments in Sri Lanka, since 1993, have prioritised the problems of VAW. Law on sexual offences, adopted as a policy document in 1993 (UNP Government) has been developed further and passed with the agreement of all parties during the Popular Alliance Government. Parliament by consensus has also passed budgetary allocations to support programmes such as women and children's units in police stations. All concerned departments,



such as the judicial medical officers, police and health service must coordinate and strengthen their operations.

Dr. Chandrakala Pandey, MP from India also spoke about the need for special Parliamentary Committees on VAW. At the same time, parliamentarians have to take up these problems at the constituency level and make the community aware of the problems.

Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan, MP Bangladesh, pointed out that while laws exist, further legislation is required: effective implementation of the laws is crucial. "All parliamentarians from all parties must be seized with the issues involved and formulate effective remedies," he stated.

Group Work on National Responses to VAW

During this session, participants were divided into three groups. Group one dealt with addressing gaps in legislation and implementation of laws on VAW: Group two dealt with addressing gaps in support services, including health, for victims of VAW: and Group three dealt with mobilising communities to address VAW.

Commitments by Parliamentarians

Following the working group session, parliamentarians were requested to write down what they could do on a personal basis as a follow-up to the Dhaka VAW Workshop. Some very useful ideas came to light:

Mr. M.A. Matin, MP Bangladesh – "I am committed to uphold the mission and vision of this workshop to the best of my ability and capacity."

Mr. Dasho Sangay Dorji, MNA on behalf of the Delegation of Parliamentarians from Bhutan – "All possible efforts shall be made to eradicate sexual abuse and sexual harassment of women and girls, particularly in the workplace, community and in rural social life while on the whole gender equality and the empowerment of women, social, political and economic, will be actively advocated."

Mr. Lakshman Singh, MP India, Vice-Chairman of AFPPD – "I would try to expedite setting up centres for rehabilitation of destitute women."

Mr. Chandra Sekhar Reddy, MP (Rajya Sabha), India – "I would like to provide infrastructure (buildings), specially for women and I will also allocate matching funds for this noble cause."

Dr. M Jagannath, MP (Lok Sabha), India – "I shall help HIV / AIDS patients who face boycott from society / community, and make them feel they are safe in the society."

Dr. Chandrakala Pandey, MP (Rajya Sabha), India – "I will campaign against any type of oppression on women and take up issues like dowry, wife beating and sexual harassment. If I come to know about any sex determination centre in my locality or elsewhere, I will take action against them."

Ms. Aneesa Ahmed, Minister for Women and Children Affairs, Maldives – "I shall hold informal discussions in my constituency to sensitise the people on VAW."

Mr. Ismail Zahir, MP Maldives – "I will visit my constituency to inform the people on the provisions of the Declaration of this meeting."

Ms. Fatimah Sheeren Abdullah, MP Maldives – "I would like to sensitise men about violence against women through the media."

Ms. Pavithra Devi Wanniarachchi, MP on behalf of the Sri Lankan Delegation – "We will propose to have a Women Parliamentarians' Sub-Committee included in our Human Rights Committee."

Mr. Sardar Muhammad Yaqub, Deputy Speaker of Parliament, Pakistan – "I will move a legislation bill in my Parliament to constitute a committee which will look after the legislation for VAW."

Mr. Sardar Tufail Ahmed Khan, Member, National Assembly of Pakistan – "I will take every step for the encouragement of women in our country."

Dr. Donya Aziz, Member, National Assembly of Pakistan – "I will pursue the task of adding values/ethics to our school programmes."

Dr. Firdous Ashiq Awan, Member of National Assembly of Pakistan – "More the NGOs will be organised to create awareness in the rural and most remote areas, better the women will know their legitimate rights."

Ms. Shagufta Jumani, Member, National Assembly of Pakistan – "I shall move a resolution in the National Assembly of Pakistan stating that there should not be any discrimination against women on the basis of gender and there should not be any violence against women."

Ch. Muhammad Rafiq, Additional Secretary, National Assembly of Pakistan – "I shall encourage women members of parliament to work for the welfare of womenfolk of the country."

Mr. Ramezan Wahidi, MP, Director of Population and Development Group of Iran – "I will organise a meeting between NGOs and governmental organisations working on the subject, i.e. violence against women and will unify their aims and efforts."

Adoption of Dhaka Declaration

Announcing the Dhaka Declaration at the concluding session of Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on violence against women the parliamentarians asserted that they would strive to promote the creation of a non-violent culture in their respective countries through education and sensitisation strategies targeting men and women. The Dhaka Declaration was a call to action addressing parliamentarians in the region, national governments, the community and the media, to empower women through access to education, laws, policies, programmes, poverty alleviation, and the enhancement of women's roles in their communities. They also pledged to strengthen support services for victims of violence, reinforce research and information sharing, enhance regional cooperation on VAW issues including combating the trafficking of girls and women, and share best practices on all relevant matters in the region.

Closing Session

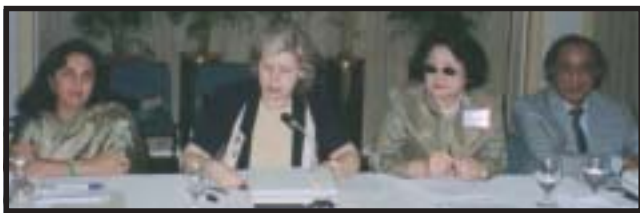
The meeting was officially closed by Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA Ms. Imelda Henkin, and addressed Secretary General of AFPPD Senator Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Executive Director of AFPPD Mr. Shiv Khare and UNFPA Representative Suneeta Mukherjee. It was chaired by Barrister Ziaur Rahman Khan, MP Bangladesh.

Did You Know?

If the HIV/AIDS epidemic continues unabated, in the next 12 months nearly 9,000 people will die each day from the disease.



Dhaka Snapshots



L. to R: Ms. Suneeta Mukherjee, UNFPA Bangladesh - Ms. Imelda Henkin, UNFPA - Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit - Barrister Khan, MP Bangladesh



L. to R: Ms. Ena Singh, UNFPA India - Indian Delegation



Other members of the Indian Delegation



Maldives Delegation



Sri Lankan Delegation



Pakistani Delegation



Bhutanese Delegation

Special Parliamentarians' Session at the 3rd World Water Forum

The Japanese cities of Kyoto, Shiga and Osaka were the venues for the eight-day long 3rd World Water Forum: the most important international water meeting ever. From the 16th to the 23rd of March, twenty-four thousand participants – triple the amount expected – from one hundred and eighty-two countries attended to discuss key issues such as balancing increasing human requirements for adequate water supplies, improved health and sanitation, food production, transportation, energy and environmental needs, effective governance, and improved capacity and adequate funding.

The forum was made up of three hundred and fifty-one separate sessions on thirty-eight interlocking themes all dealing with water and, particularly, how to bring safe water and sanitation to the world. One of these sessions was a day-long 'special parliamentarians' session.'

Globe (Japan) hosted this special session on 'Water and Parliamentarians' during the Water Forum and AFPPD assisted by nominating parliamentarians to attend this important session. Parliamentarians nominated by AFPPD to participate included Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan and Chair of AFPPD, Mr. Manzur Quader MP Bangladesh, Mr. Abdisa Yadeta, MP Ethiopia, Mr. Yermek Kelemsejit MP Kazakhstan, Mr. Jantrovich Bektur Asanov MP Kyrgyzstan, Mr. Tiemoko Dembele, MP Mali, Mr. Santos Jaimes Serkovic MP Peru, Mr. Augusto Baculio, MP Philippines, and Mr. Nirun Phitakwatchara, MP Thailand.



Participants at the 3rd World Water Forum in Japan

European Union Provides 22 Million Euros to UNFPA for Youth Programme

New York – UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, and the European Union (EU) signed an agreement on the 28th of March for a 22-million-euro, three-year Reproductive Health Initiative for Youth in Asia, which will be implemented in seven countries.

The EU will provide 18.5 million of the total of 22.24 million euros. UNFPA, with overall responsibility for implementing the initiative, will contribute 1.85 million euros. Another 1.85 million euros is expected from executing non-governmental organisations (NGOs). The new initiative will be implemented in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Lao PDR, Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka and Viet Nam.



Parliamentarians Discuss Poverty and Ensuring Globalisation Really Benefits Everyone

4th Annual Conference of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank in Athens

Athens, Greece - Around one hundred and forty members of the Parliamentary Network of the World Bank (PNoWB) from sixty-seven different countries gathered in Athens, Greece on the 9th and 10th of March 2003 to attend the PNoWB's 4th Annual Conference hosted by the Government of Greece. The heads of both the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF) as well as other leaders in international development met with parliamentarians, NGO and other inter-governmental organisation representatives to debate development, the role of global institutions and, most importantly, unveil ways in which parliamentarians could better contribute to the fight against poverty and make sure globalisation works for everyone. AFPPD was represented by Chairman Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan, Secretary General Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD, Executive Director Mr. Shiv Khare. Some AFPPD-associated parliamentarians attended as country representatives.

The road leading to a better world was paved in September 2000 at the United Nations Millennium Summit where the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) were adopted by one hundred and eighty-nine nations. It was agreed that by 2015 the world would aim to halve poverty and spur significant improvements in education, gender equality, health care, and in overcoming hunger and environmental degradation. Rich countries agreed to do their share by boosting official development assistance (ODA), and harmonising their development policies and procedures while poor countries stated they would implement sound policies, ensure the rule of law and invest in their people.

The challenge is clear: translate commitments into action and improve the lives of the poor in developing countries. It is here where parliamentarians should and can play a role alongside civil society and the private sector, stimulating and increasing the accountability of governments and international organisations.

It was also decided during the Athens Conference to establish the 'Parliamentary Implementation Watch' that will monitor the implementation of the Doha, Monterrey and Johannesburg Summit PoAs. This is to ensure the promotion and appropriate monitoring of activities undertaken to keep countries on track so they can meet the Millennium Development Goals.

Regional Groups Discuss Foreign Aid

During an informal working session on the morning of the 9th of March, AFPPD, IEPFPD and IAPG came together to discuss regional cooperation among MPs, interaction with the World Bank and to talk about foreign aid. The session was facilitated by a parliamentarian from each region and chaired by Mr. A. Moyeen Khan, Minister of Information, Bangladesh.



Centre: Mr. Moyeen Khan, Minister of Information, Bangladesh - Second right: Mr. A. Suresh Keswani, MP India

The morning working session was followed by several 'parallel sessions'. The first, chaired by Mr. Suresh Keswani, MP India, entitled 'Making Services Work for Poor People' focused on in depth discussion among participants and consultation on the World Bank's 'World Development Report 2004'. A presentation was given by Ms. Shanta Devarajan, Chief Economist, Human Development Network, the World Bank. Mr. Norbert Mao, MP Uganda, was discussant.

The second parallel session was called 'The Role of Parliamentarians in Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers' It was chaired by Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, MP Finland with Mr. Tony Colman, MP UK as discussant. Mr. Steve Akorli, MP Ghana, Ms. Natasha Milojevic, MP Serbia, and Ms. Katrina Sharkey, Senior Operations Officer, PREM, World Bank, participated.

World Bank President Meets AFPPD Officers



L. to R: Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan - Mr. James D. Wolfensohn - Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD

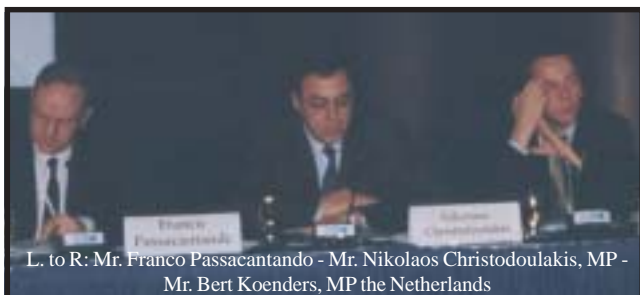
9th of March 2003 - Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank, held a private meeting with leading members of the regional parliamentary groups on population and development; AFPPD, IEPFPD and IAPG. Mr. Wolfensohn expressed strong support for the work of parliamentarians in actively raising awareness on HIV/AIDS issues and encouraged the development of the respective networks in their support to population issues. He had lengthy discussions with AFPPD Chairman Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan with whom he has worked on other issues before, and Secretary General Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD.



Time to Confront Our Fears and Take Action

It was in the afternoon of the 9th the main conference was officially opened by Mr. Nikolaos Christodoulakis, Minister of Economy and Finance, Parliament of Greece. Mr. Christodoulakis told participants that the challenge of today is working out how we can make a better case for global cooperation in order to achieve higher growth, prevent problems accelerating into crises, promote international trade, and above all, ease tensions through participation rather than isolation. "Among the challenges perhaps the worthiest one would be determining how we put ourselves in a position to reduce the rhetoric and increase action." he said.

Welcome addresses were delivered by Mr. Bert Koenders, MP the Netherlands, and Mr. Franco Passacantando, Executive Director of the World Bank. Both the speakers pointed



L. to R: Mr. Franco Passacantando - Mr. Nikolaos Christodoulakis, MP - Mr. Bert Koenders, MP the Netherlands

out that major inequalities still exist between the rich and poor countries, but also within countries, especially rich countries, where the number of poor people increases. Social cohesion within each and every country is necessary and in order to achieve this, improvements must be made in institutions and democratic regimes. There is an urgent need for development aid, but this can only be effective if combined with good governance. To this effect, cooperation among international institutions, donors and receivers is necessary if we are to generate results benefiting everyone. Finally, in a world where economic and social changes are speeding up allocations must be supported by democratic representation and democratic control and it is here the role of parliamentarians is crucial.

Partnerships Between Developing and Developed Countries

Chaired by Mr. Bert Koenders, MP the Netherlands, the first session focused on keynote speaker Mr. James D. Wolfensohn, President of the World Bank. Mr. Wolfensohn began by reminding participants of the Millennium Development Goals and how it was agreed to tackle issues such as maternal and infant mortality, environmental degradation, water resources, slums and poverty, and so on. "If we are going to deal with all these issues and make good on our promises, how are we going to do it?" he asked. "Parliamentarians are quite right to address the question of the efficiency of the current system."

"One topic in which parliamentarians have a direct say," he continued, "is in the level of development assistance. It is fairly clear, in every study that has been conducted that even the most effective use of development assistance as it is now constituted, even the most ardent pursuit of coordination and simplification of process, even the most effective use of monies and human resources is likely to be less than the

transfer of resources needed to meet the various development goals by an amount estimated as being an extra 70 billion dollars or so."

"The second issue is that of international trade. It is impossible to discuss transfer of resources without first thinking about the other side of the issue: access to markets so countries may build up their own capacity to achieve their development goals. Trade is a critical component of poverty alleviation and development."

Finally, Mr. Wolfensohn turned to the thorny subject of corruption. He explained that corruption can only be dealt with from the inside and that addressing it is only possible when the citizens themselves decide they want to rid their country of it. This is the last part of the circle he stated. "As representatives of the people, the involvement of elected representatives in shining a light of transparency on the questions surrounding corruption and bringing about reforms within the context of the governmental system is essential."

In conclusion, he said "There are so many issues on our minds at the moment. The issue of coordination and cooperation of relief efforts: the pressures of issues such as population, HIV/AIDS, water resources, post-conflict, education, environmental degradation: issues of legal and judicial reform, issues of regulatory reform: issues of corruption. These are all elements that cannot be ignored in the quest for reduction of poverty. It is a complex area and one in which there is a need for knowledge and enhanced partnerships."

Mr. Wolfensohn's speech was followed by a lively discussion.

Need for Better Globalisation

Session two revolved around a presentation on globalisation given by Mr. Horst Kohler, the Managing Director of the International Monetary Fund (IMF). "The critical debate on globalisation continues in the capitals and the streets around the world," commenced Mr. Kohler, "and I believe the world needs sustainable growth to reduce poverty. Globalisation is a crucial engine of growth through the spread of knowledge, expansion of choices, better division of labour, increased productivity, and access to foreign direct investment. Over the past fifty years, the process of globalisation has been the source of unprecedented gains in human welfare. But it has also brought about risks and challenges, including disruptive volatility in international capital flows, which has destabilised domestic economies, threatening to undo the gains from openness. Such volatility has been particularly detrimental to poor countries."

"The debate on globalisation is healthy and one that should be encouraged. We should not confuse ourselves: the people of the world need more globalisation, not less. However, we need better globalisation. Integration into the global economy must be accompanied by investments to make it more inclusive and to better balance risks and benefits – at the national level, investments in people, in better policies and in regulatory frameworks to take advantage of the opportunities that the global marketplace offers: and at the international level, investments in more effective cooperation to guide and shape the process of globalisation."

Mr. Kohler's presentation was also followed by a discussion.



PNoWB Working Methods

Session three, the last session of the day, was devoted to an in depth explanation of the PNoWB's agenda and activities. A report on PNoWB's activities was presented along with details of the legal structure of the network. This was closely followed by a discussion on the work programme and a description of the election process of the PNoWB's Steering Committee. Mr. Jean-Christophe Bas, Manager Pan-European Dialogue, World Bank spoke as well as members of PNoWB's Steering Committee Mr. Suresh Keswani, MP India: Mr. Kimmo Kiljunen, MP Finland: Mr. Bert Koenders, MP the Netherlands: Mr. Ndam Njoya Adama, MP Cameroon: Ms. Charity Ngilu, MP Kenya: Ms. Monica Frassoni, MP Italy: and Mr. Tony Worthington, MP UK.

Parliamentarians Must Strive for Affordable HIV Treatment in Developing Countries



L. to R: Mr. Neil Datta, Executive Secretary, IEPFPD - Ladies L. to R: Ms. Venus Easwaran Jennings, Consultant, PNoWB - Ms. Charity Ngilu, Health Minister, Kenya

The PNoWB's committee on HIV/AIDS met informally in the morning on the 10th of March to review accomplishments and renew momentum. The aim of the meeting was to follow-up on recommendations made at the first HIV committee meeting in 2002, discuss parliamentarians' role in fighting HIV/AIDS, and suggest possible activities and initiatives for the committee. Under the chairmanship of Ms. Charity Ngilu, Minister of Health, Kenya, parliamentarians and AFPPD representatives made sound suggestions including re-emphasising that contributions to the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS must be additional to existing development budgets and that parliamentarians could play a useful role in supporting affordable HIV treatment in developing countries. AFPPD was represented by its Chairman, Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan, Secretary General Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD, and Executive Director Mr. Shiv Khare.

Realising the Millennium Development Goals Parliamentarians Crucial

The second day of the Athens conference (10th of March) commenced with session four entitled 'After Doha, Monterrey, and Johannesburg' and was broken down into two segments. The first segment 'Achieving the MDGs: How Can Parliamentarians Make Things Happen' was chaired by Mr. Tony Worthington, MP UK. Substantive and highly informative presentations were given by Ms. Eveline Herfkens, UN Secretary General's Executive Coordinator of the MDG Campaign, USA, and by Congressman Mr. Barney Frank, USA.

The second segment was based on trade, foreign aid and development with a special focus on the need for policy

cohesion. It was chaired by Mr. Jaques Pelletier, MP France and Mr. Gonzalo Fanjul, Intermon OXFAM Spain and Mr. Uri Dadush, Director of Development Prospect Groups (DECPG), World Bank both spoke .

AFPPD Coads Population Session at PNoWB Conference

AFPPD, IEPFPD and IAPG cohosted a session on population and development at the 4th Annual Conference of the PNoWB. Chaired by Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit AFPPD Secretary General, it was attended by over thirty parliamentarians from all over the world. Presentations were given by Mr. Tony Worthington MP UK and Treasurer of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, and Ms. Magda De Meyer, MP Belgium. Mr. Worthington underlined the need to place the fight against HIV/AIDS squarely in a sexual / reproductive health context and recalled IPPF's Director General Mr. Steven Sinding's call for the new US-pledged \$15 billion to HIV/AIDS funding to not be burdened with the Gag Rule restrictions.



L. to R: Ms. Olga Camey de Noack, MP Guatamala - Mr. Tony Worthington, MP UK - Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD, Secretary General AFPPD - Ms. Magda De Meyer, MP and Co-Chair of the Belgian Parliamentary Group on Population and Development

PNoWB Special Workshops

In the afternoon three special workshops were organised. The first, 'The Black Sea Economic Cooperation: What Role for Parliamentarians,' was chaired by Mr. Sendov Blagovest, Vice President of Bulgarian Parliament with presentations by Ambassador Valeri Chechelashvili, Secretary of the General Black Sea Economic Cooperation (BSEC), and Mr. Yannis Papanicolaou, Director General, International Center for Black Sea Studies (ICBSS) Greece. The second workshop focused on debt reduction strategy, moratoria and bankruptcy with speeches delivered by Mr. Thomas C. Dawson, Director of External Relations IMF and Ms. Susanna Luithlen, Director of the Jubilee Campaign, Germany. Ms. Inge Lonning, MP Norway chaired the session.

Enhanced Assistance for Developing Countries a Must

The fifth session examined the current situation in relation to assistance for developing countries. Debates revolved around expanding foreign aid options and new criteria for aid allocation. It was chaired by Ms. Karin Kortmann, MP Germany and presentations were given by Mr. Jorge Quiroga, the former President of Bolivia and Mr. Daniel Kaufmann, Director of the Global Governance Unit, World Bank Institute.

The conference concluded with the presentation of PNoWB's action plan, a debate on cooperation with international parliamentary networks and the election of PNoWB's Steering Committee.



IPPF Director General Meets Japanese Officials and Parliamentarians

Mr. Steven Sinding Director General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation paid a visit to Japan in late february to meet with parliamentarians, government representatives, NGOs, international agencies and the media to discuss reproductive health and rights. Mr. Sinding met with



L. to R. Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, MP Japan - Mr. Steven Sinding, IPPF

Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan and Chair of AFPPD, Mr. Yasuo Kon, Executive Director of JOICFP and Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, MP Japan and AFPPD's founding father. In his meeting with Mr. Fukuda, Mr. Sinding explained IPPF's future focus and activities, and thanked him for the support Japan has provided to IPPF. Mr. Fukuda, well aware of the importance of the population issue, stated that although Japan's economic situation is still severe, he would do all that he could to continue Japanese support to IPPF and UNFPA.

Luxembourg Increases Contributions to UNFPA by 33%

United Nations, New York – UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, welcomed Luxembourg's decision to increase by nearly 33% its allocation to the Fund's regular resources. This would take Luxembourg's contribution to about 727,000 euros for 2003. UNFPA's Executive Director Mrs. Thoraya Obaid said "I hope this substantial increase will mark an intensification of donors' efforts to reverse a recent dip in external assistance to implement the Cairo Conference Programme of Action. This is essential because the Millennium Development Goals cannot be achieved without resources for reproductive health needs in developing countries." "This is another example of the generosity of the Government and people of Luxembourg who provided the entire \$4.5 million UNFPA sought in 2001 to assist women and men in Afghanistan," she added.

AFPPD Officers Elected to New PNoWB Board

Sen. Malinee Sukavejworakit MD Secretary General of AFPPD has been elected to the Parliamentary Network on World Bank's board. Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan and AFPPD's Chairman has been elected to PNoWB's board as an associate member.

Food for Thought The Ethics of Globalisation

At present, Americans emit about 5 tonnes of carbon per person, while the Chinese emit 0.76 tonnes, and Indians 0.29 tonnes. Why does the present system allow some countries to emit a large share of greenhouse gases, and others are forced to pick up more of the costs?

UN Panel Debates Links Between Population, Education and Development

The UN Commission on Population and Development opened its 36th session march the 30th with a week-long agenda concentrated on the links between population, education and development. The Commission will consider reports, hold a debate and address follow-up actions to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development, which called for universal access to primary education before 2015 and the elimination of the gender gap in primary and secondary education by 2005.

Reports before the Commission indicate that the global community, and Africa in particular, is witnessing rapid growth in the population of school-age children, who now number about 1 billion. By 2050, the number of school-age children in Africa is expected to double from its current level of 330 million.

The report says that as of 1999-2000, 115 million children of primary-school age were not in school. The gender gap also persists – two-thirds of the world's illiterate adults are women. Countries with higher female literacy rates and educational levels have lower fertility rates than those countries with lower education levels. Those countries where women have low education levels see higher mortality rates for mothers and children under the age of five.

Person to Person Advocacy – Mid-Term Reviews

The Hewlett Foundation is supporting the 'Person to Person Advocacy Programme (PPAP),' which involves talking to parliamentarians on a one-to-one basis on population and development issues. This programme is currently being conducted in Indonesia, Malaysia, Cambodia, and the Philippines. The Indonesian and Cambodian PPAP was recently reviewed by AFPPD's Mr. Shiv Khare Executive Director and Mr. Steve Dashiell, Consultant.

Medical Parliamentarians Mobilisation to be Strengthened

Thanks to the support of the Japanese Government and UNFPA, the Asian Forum will be providing additional support to IMPO in order to enhance its activities in the mobilisation of medical parliamentarians around the world. A directory of medical parliamentarians is being compiled and an International Medical Parliamentarians' Conference will be held in Bangkok sometime this year.

Call for Action Against Unsafe Abortion in Africa

In early March more than one hundred African leaders from fifteen countries attended a regional conference on unsafe abortion. The conference, which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, concluded with a strong call for action to address this very serious health problem; **more than 30,000 African women die each year as a result of unsafe abortion.** Participants attending the 'Action to Reduce Maternal Mortality in Africa' included health ministers, parliamentarians, health-care professionals, women's advocates, lawyers and others.



Japan Continues Same Level of Funding to UNFPA and IPPF

Tokyo – Once the largest contributor to the United Nations Population Fund, Japanese funding has only recently been surpassed by that of the Netherlands. However, thanks to a profound understanding of the urgency of population and development issues and, regardless of the slowdown in Japanese economy, Japan remains to be the second largest contributor and is maintaining that position. The continuous efforts of the Japanese Parliamentarians Federation on Population (JPFP), the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) the Japanese Organisation for International Cooperation on Family Planning (JOICFP), and the UNFPA office in Japan has ensured that Japanese interest in these issues is unwavering.

Japanese official development assistance (ODA) has been cut by 5.8% and funds for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was reduced by 4.2%, but Japan still provided US\$ 40.52 million to UNFPA and US\$ 15.73 million to IPPF. Additionally, the Japanese Government established the JTF, a million dollar trust fund specifically for parliamentarians' activities, for UNFPA.

Role of JPFP

The Japanese Parliamentarians Federation on Population (JPFP) was formed in 1980 in order to mobilise support for the population and development programme in Japan. Dr. Taro Nakayama, MP Japan is the organisation's chair and Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan is its secretary general. JPFP has been involving other members of parliament with administrative support from APDA to organise programmes and ensure Japanese lawmakers realise that population reduction in a large number of countries is essential for development growth.

The Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) and AFPPD have organised not only regional and sub-regional meetings and seminars with Japanese parliamentarians but also study visits for Japanese parliamentarians; China, Mongolia, Cambodia, Eastern Africa and, this year, South Africa, so they may witness first hand just how Japanese assistance is having an impact and the significant difference it makes.

AFPPD and APDA also arranged for the participation of Japanese parliamentarians in the World Summit on Sustainable Development and the 3rd World Water Forum, and organised an international public forum in Tokyo. Special parliamentary dialogue sessions took place with Ms. Thoraya Obaid Executive Director of UNFPA, Mr. Kunio Waki, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, Dr. Lester Brown President of the Earth Policy Institute, Mr. Steve Sinding Director General of IPPF, and Mr. Christopher Levin President of the World Watch Institute.

Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan and Chair of AFPPD gave addresses at both the International Parliamentarians' Conference (IPC) in Ottawa and the Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and ICPD Implementation, which was held as a side event to the Fifth Asian and Pacific Conference on Population (APPC) in Bangkok.

These and other efforts on the part of JPFP, APDA, JOICFP and UNFPA Tokyo have made Japanese parliamentarians more aware of the need to support population and development in developing countries. Women parliamentarians are also playing a special role.

IAPG Workshop on Emergency Contraception

Lima, Peru - On the 27th of March, the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (IAPG) organised a workshop for parliamentarians and journalists on emergency contraception (EC) entitled 'Myth and Reality in Emergency Contraception.' The workshop included two panels, the first of which focused on the reproductive health status of Peruvian Women and the very high rate of unwanted pregnancies. The second panel concentrated on mode of action of EC and strategies to increase its access and availability. The panels were composed of Peruvian leaders, including the President of the College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, and important women's NGOs. Participants at the workshop received up-to-date information, and doubts concerning mechanisms of action, effectiveness, safety, and treatment of side-effects of the contraceptives were clarified. Two other meetings were organised by IAPG's local partners in conjunction with the Lima workshop

IAPG plans to continue organising workshops of a similar kind for parliamentarians with the support of the Japan Trust Fund for Parliamentarians (JTF) and UNFPA

14th International Drug Related Harm Conference

Chaing Mai, Thailand - the 14th International Drug-related Harm Conference spanned for five days from the 6th to the 10th of April. It was organised by the International Harm Reduction Association in partnership with the Asian Harm Reduction Network and hosted by the Thai Ministry of Public Health and the Office of narcotics Control Board.

The conference placed special emphasis on harm reduction advocacy, implementation and scaling up. It follows the success of the 13th conference in Slovenia which focused on social change, inclusion and exclusion, and the 12th conference in India where community development for harm reduction was the theme.

UNICEF Thailand also contributed by giving special focus to youth, HIV/AIDS and drugs. The Conference held plenary and major sessions, symposia, roundtables, skills building, and thematic poster sessions. The conference was constituted of seventy sessions with three hundred and fifty speakers.



New Executive Director for JOICFP



Ms. Sumie Ishii

As of the 1st April 2003, Ms. Sumie Ishii Yamaguchi, former Deputy Executive Director, was appointed as Executive Director of the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP). Ms. Ishii takes over

the responsibility from Mr. Yasuo Kon who has been the leadership for JOICFP as Executive Director for the last fourteen years. Ms. Ishii will be supported by Mr. Ryoichi Suzuki who is taking over the position of Deputy Executive Director.



Mr. Ryoichi Suzuki

PGA Completes Twenty-Five Years of Work

The Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA) is a non-profit non-partisan network of individual elected representatives promoting effective inter-parliamentary collaboration for the mobilisation of global political action for international law and human rights, population and sustainable development, and economic revitalisation and arms control. PGA has now been in existence for twenty-five years and has made much progress during the years it has been active in the population and sustainable development field.

PGA Secretary General Ms. Shazia Rafi said "in twenty-five years PGA has devoted its time to mobilising parliamentarians to defend democracy and work towards global peace."

Australian Parliamentarians' Newsletter

The Australian All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development is now issuing its very own newsletter. Anyone interested in receiving copies should contact the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance's Secretariat.

Mr. Werner Fornos Receives UN Population Award



Well-known Population activist Mr. Werner Fornos has received the United Nations Population Award 2003. Mr. Fornos is the President of the United States-based Population Institute. The Family Planning Association of Kenya also received an award.

Mr. Fornos is the winner in the individual category.

Since 1982, he has been the President of the Population Institute, which is primarily devoted to creating materials and techniques to increase awareness of population growth and family planning programmes. "It is difficult to think of one person who has done more to ensure that issues of population remain at the forefront of public and governmental discourse," said the Committee on Mr. Fornos's nomination.

Mr. Fornos is a tireless and very engaging speaker, making as many as 75 presentations a year in not only America, but around the world. As President of the Population Institute, he established the publications 'Popline' and 'Towards the 21st Century', which are widely used throughout the world. He has been a successful advocate of population funding in the United States.

The Family Planning Association of Kenya also received the award in the institutional category. Founded in 1962 as a volunteer-based non-governmental organisation, On the Association's nomination it was said "it has pioneered the family planning movement in Kenya, promoting the provision of sexual and reproductive health services within the context of reproductive rights and the empowerment of young people."

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