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FORUM NEWSLETTER

Publication of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

European Parliamentarians Committed to Furthering Sexual Health and the ICPD PoA

The Inter-European Parliamentary Forum Meets in Lisbon, Portugal

The Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPFPD) held its Third Council meeting in the Portuguese Senate on 26 and 27 May 2003 in Lisbon upon the invitation of the President of the Portuguese Parliament, Mr Joao Bosco da Mota Amaral, the Portuguese Parliamentary Group on Population and Development and the Portuguese FPA. The meeting brought together parliamentarians from over twenty European countries in order to discuss resource mobilisation, creating an enabling environment and overcoming barriers and obstacles to implementation of the ICPD. Representatives from other parliamentary networks (AFPPD, IAPG and FAAPPD) were present as well as UNFPA, IPPF, IPPF EN, PNoWB, population and RH NGOs from Spain, the UK, Germany, France, Portugal and Turkey, and various embassies. Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD, AFPPD



L. to R: Mr. Stirling Scruggs, Director UNFPA IERD - Ms. Ana Manso MP and Chair of the Portuguese Parliamentary Group on Population and Development - Mrs. Thoraya Obaid UNFPA Executive Director - Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD Secretary General AFPPD

Secretary General, addressed the council meeting and assured full cooperation in the future development of IEPFPD.

The opening ceremony was addressed by Mrs. Thoraya Obaid Executive Director, UNFPA and Mr. Steve Sinding Director General of IPPF who both called on European parliamentarians to take on the leadership in ensuring universal reproductive health. Hon. Leonor Beleza, Vice President of the Portuguese Assembleia de Republica, Hon. Martins de Cruz, Minister of Foreign Affairs, Portugal, and Ms. Catarina Furtado, UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador also spoke. The session was chaired by Ms. Marjatta Vehkaoja MP, President of IEPFPD.

Population and RH Must be Addressed Squarely

In her address at the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum, Mrs. Thoraya Obaid the Executive Director of UNFPA said "We continue to face a very difficult environment surrounding population funding and official development assistance. In fact, globally, population funding declined from the previous year. We also continue to face ideological opposition," she said. "The attempts by some anti-family planning and anti-women's rights groups to undermine UNFPA and its work became increasingly visible and persistent.

Despite all these setbacks, however, we were able to join forces and win a major political victory. This was made possible by strengthened partnership with our friends, in particular with parliamentarians. In this regard, I would like to thank the members of the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development for defending the ICPD PoA at all relevant UN meetings, including the Children's Summit in New York, the World Summit on Sustainable Development in Johannesburg, and the Fifth Asian Pacific Population Conference in Bangkok. The International Parliamentarians' Conference that took place in Ottawa last November also gave a clear message that parliamentarians of the world want to save women's lives and they see this particular goal not as a political decision, but as a life or death decision."

"As Secretary General Mr. Kofi Annan stated 'the Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed. And this means stronger efforts to promote women's rights and greater investment in education and health, including reproductive health and family planning'."



Mr. Steve Sinding Director General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation said "IPPF greatly values our collaborative work with parliamentarians. IPPF considers itself to be the informal partner of parliamentarians across the globe and it is our pleasure to actively extend our support of groups such as the IEPFPD.

You hold the institutional key to the effective implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. Without your valuable proactive support in terms of your national and regional budgetary processes each year, Europe would not be one of the largest donors on ICPD issues today. Without your coordination within the IEPFPD over the past twelve months, the US Administration would have undoubtedly been more successful in their fierce campaign to at the very least erode if not obliterate ICPD language and hence reproductive rights from ODA policies and budget allocations.

Over the past year IPPF has successfully collaborated with individual parliamentarians across wider Europe as well as the IEPFPD as a body in its own right.

We have worked to change attitudes and behaviour on a practical as well as policy level over the last year. Europe is home to 18 of the 23 donor countries and the largest source of funding on SRHR issues. More importantly, Europe is where many of the advances in reproductive health and rights have been made and in the difficult situation we are facing today, it is to Europe that we must look to protect the gains we have made over the past decade."

Following the opening session, Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD, AFPPD Secretary General, spoke on behalf of AFPPD. In her speech she said that AFPPD has been working hard with Japanese, Australian and New Zealand parliamentarians to ensure that funds for population activities, especially UNFPA and IPPF activities, continue to come in. One of the most important steps - a direct result of parliamentary influence - was the establishment of the Japan Trust Fund. She then explained that the idea of involving parliamentarians is now being pursued by UN agencies such as UNICEF, UNDP and HABITAT, but perhaps most prominent of all is the Parliamentary Network of World Bank. She also spoke on AFPPD programmes and UNFPA.

Parliamentarian Involvement In Population is Vital

Hon. Ana Manso MP Portugal, Portuguese Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, Hon. Abdul Fattah Diab MP Egypt, Executive Committee member of FAAPPD, Hon. Laura Carneiro, MP Brazil, Executive Committee

member IAPG, and Hon. Ulla Sandbaek, MEP Denmark also gave speeches.

Need to Increase Donor Funding

The first session of the Third Council Meeting of IEPFPD



L. to R: Ms. Catarina Furtado, UNFPA Goodwill Ambassador - Mrs. Thoraya Obaid UNFPA Executive Director - Hon. Leonor Beza Vice president of the Portuguese Assembleia de Republica - Hon Marjatta Vehkaoja MP and President of IEPFPD - Mr. Neil Datta Executive Secretary IEPFPD - Hon Jose Cesario Secretary of State - Mr. Steve Sinding IPPF Director General

was based on the challenges in meeting ICPD goals and European solutions to these challenges. A keynote address was delivered by Hon. Lourenco dos Santos, Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs and Cooperation, Portugal during this session, which was chaired by Irish Senator Mary Henry, IEPFPD Executive

Committee member. The session was broken down into two segments, the first of which focused on creating an enabling environment, with presentations from IPPF Regional Director Ms. Vicky Claeyes who introduced the state of European reproductive health, and Dr. Gaye Erbatur MP who presented a case study of Turkey. Resource mobilisation was the next topic for discussion in this session, and Mr. Satu Hassi MP Finland and former Development Minister talked extensively on the unmet need in donor resources. He called for a 10% increase in European donor funding for population issues in 2004. A case study of Ireland was given by Mr. Jan O'Sullivan TD.

The next generation of policy-makers was the theme of the second session, which was chaired by Hon. Gustav Fridolin MP and commenced with a keynote address by Hon. Herminio Loureiro, Secretary of State for Youth Affairs, Portugal. Participants then heard from political party youth leaders who spoke on the next generation of leaders, inspired by the RFSU model in Sweden, and the relevance of population and development issues for the next generation. Youth leaders included Mr. Jorge Nuno MP, Ms. JAMILA Madeira MP, Ms. Joana Amaral MP, Mr. Joao Almeida MP and Mr. Bernardino Soares MP. Concluding comments were given by Ms. Natalia Carrascalao MP Portugal and Mr. Eugenio Castillo MP Spain.

European Leadership Future Prospects

The second day of the meeting began with a look at future prospects for European leadership to advance the Cairo PoA on population and development, and sexual and reproductive health rights. Critical issues up for discussion were: defending the ICPD PoA presented by Senator Marie Claude Beaudeau from France and Hon. Christine McCafferty MP UK: the HIV/AIDS pandemic and the role of parliamentarians, Hon. Nikolay Gerasimenko MP Russia: Unmet needs in the Lusophone world by Hon. Isabel Castro MP Portugal: and protecting human rights – the case of Slovakia by Hon. Ulla Sandbaek MEP Denmark.

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Second Steering Committee of the 2nd APCRSH Discusses Conference Agenda

The International Scientific Steering Committee for the Asian Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health convened its second meeting on the 10th and 11th of April 2003 to discuss the agenda of the upcoming 2nd Asia Pacific Conference on Reproductive and Sexual Health, which will take place in Bangkok from the 6th to the 10th of October 2003

Jointly organised by the Ministry of Public Health, Thailand, the Center for Health and Policy Studies, Mahidol University, and the Youth Family and Community Development Project of Chiang Mai University, an attendance of over 1,500 participants from NGOs, government, donor agencies and others is expected. Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD will be chair of the conference.

It was decided that the conference should be broken down into five main sections concentrating on five themes. The first theme will focus on the changing context of sexual and reproductive health with sub-themes including RH in conflict situations, economic transition, strategies to address domestic violence and RH needs of groups living under special circumstances. The second theme, 'Sexuality', will address issues such as youth sexuality, youth sex education, diverse sexuality, denial of sexuality, pleasure and satisfaction and harmful practices. The third theme, based on sexual and reproductive rights, will look at abortion, gender-based violence, STDs and HIV/AIDS, mobile populations, SH rights and youth. The fourth session entitled 'Gender Approach' will examine male involvement in SRH, women's empowerment, gender-sensitive SRH, strategies to realise gender equity in SRH and the impact of gender. Lastly, the fifth theme will focus on comprehensive SRH services, intervention and integration.

A plenary session for parliamentarians will be organised by AFPPD. In lieu of a Call to Action or consensus statement, there will be a symposium where five participants will be asked to synthesise key ideas brought forth from the five themes to be discussed at the conference. Summary statements will focus on challenges, policy implications, gaps, issues for research and action, etc ♦

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Ms. Sandbaek presented her conclusions of a recent field mission she led on behalf of IEPFPD to Slovakia to investigate allegations of forced sterilisation of Roma women. The session was chaired by Hon. Ruth Genner MP Switzerland, IEPFPD Executive Committee member and the keynote address was given by Hon. Odete Santos MP Portugal.

Challenges to Meeting ICPD Goals

Chaired by Hon. Nikolay Gerasimenko MP Russia, the fourth and final substantive session examined challenges in meeting ICPD goals, European solutions and ICPD+10. The keynote address was delivered by Hon. Narana Coissoro MP, member of the Portuguese Parliamentary Group on Population and Development. A presentation on 'the role of parliamentarians in removing barriers to ICPD implementation' was given and this was followed with a case study of Poland given by Senator Zdzisława Janowska MP Poland in which he pointed out that poverty and the retrograde positions of the Catholic Church make implementation of the ICPD PoA difficult in Poland today.

IEPFPD statutory matters were then debated. The IEPFPD annual report for 2002 and work plan for 2003 was presented by Ms. Sonia Fertuzinhos MP. This was followed by reports from the all party parliamentary groups from Austria, Belgium, the European Parliament, Denmark, Finland, France, Georgia, Ireland, Lithuania, Portugal, the Russian Federation, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom.

IEPFPD Elects New Members

Finally, the IEPFPD Council welcomed the Polish Parliamentary Group on Population and Development as a new member and elected Ruth Genner, MP (Switzerland) as its new President. Parliamentarians from Portugal, Spain, France, the UK, Sweden, Lithuania and Turkey were elected onto the expanded Executive Committee in recognition of their commitment and devotion to population and development issues and working with European parliamentarians. The IEPFPD Council adopted a Declaration reaffirming that the ICPD Programme of Action constitutes the very basis for progress on population, sexual and reproductive health and rights and sustainable development issues.

Mr. Stirling Scruggs Director UNFPA's Internal and External Relations Division was made an honorary member of the Inter-European Forum for his dedicated efforts to mobilise parliamentarians and resources for UNFPA.

The meeting concluded with closing statements from Ms. Luisa Portugal, MP, member of the Portuguese Parliamentary Group on Population and Development, Mr. Martyn Jones MP UK and Hon. Joao Bosco de Mota Amaral, President of the Portuguese Assembleia da Republica.

Iranian Population Committee Tehran - Majiles Shoraye Islami's National Committee on Population and Development, chaired by Mr. Wahidi Ramezan MP, is constituted of forty-nine parliamentarians, seven of which are women. They are: Mrs. Elaheh Koolaei MP, Mrs. Tahereh Rezazadeh MP, Mrs. Shahrbanoo Amani MP, Mrs. Hamideh Edalat MP, Mrs. Azam Nasser Pour MP, Mrs. Fatemeh Khatami MP, and Mrs. Jamileh Kadivar MP.



Mrs. Obaid UNFPA Executive Director Briefs Japanese Parliamentarians on ICPD Implementation



L. to R: Ms. Kayoko Shimizu MP Secretary General JFPF - Mr. Michihiko Kano MP Senior Vice Chairman JFPF - Mr. Yoshio Yatsu MP Executive Director JFPF and AFPPD Chairman - Mrs. Thoraya Obaid Executive Director UNFPA - Dr. Taro Nakayama MP Chairman JFPF

Mrs. Thoraya Obaid Executive Director of UNFPA participated in a meeting of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation on Population (JFPF) held at the House of Councillors in Tokyo on Thursday the 26th of June. She gave a briefing on UNFPA activities and asked for JFPF's cooperation vis-a-vis Japanese contributions to UNFPA in the year 2004. Seventeen parliamentarians participated in the meeting including Dr. Taro Nakayama, Chairman of JFPF, Mr. Michihiko Kano, Deputy Chairman, Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, Executive Director, and Ms. Kayoko Shimizu, Secretary General.

Japan recognises the importance of population issues

Despite its tight budget, Japan is dedicated to supporting UNFPA

UNFPA supports 'Security for Women' and addresses VAW

Mrs. Obaid thanked the Japanese Government for the financial assistance it is providing to UNFPA this year, which, regardless of Japan's severe economic situation, is the same amount as last year. She informed participants as to how Japanese contributions are utilised in various activities and help towards dealing with population issues and reproductive health services. She also spoke about UNFPA's activities in Iraq and Sri Lanka. In conflict areas in Iraq, UNFPA provided medical services, built medical facilities and trained medical staff. In Sri Lanka, UNFPA provides reproductive health and counselling services to both women and the families of women who have been sexually violated, focusing on the northeast region, where a medical system is not yet in place.



L. to R: Ms. Kiyoko Ikegami Director of UNFPA Tokyo Office - Ms. Shoko Hino Intern / Interpreter - Mrs. Thoraya Obaid Executive Director UNFPA - Ms. Mihoko Tanabe Intern / Interpreter - Mr. Vernon Mack Resource Mobilisation, UNFPA

Ms. Obaid stated that human resource development is essential for both countries, particularly Sri Lanka.

After Mrs. Obaid's briefing, Dr. Taro Nakayama MP Japan Chairman of JFPF said that



Mr. Samejima Muneaki MP - Mr. Masatoshi Wakabayashi MP - Ms. Shuichi Kato MP - Ms. Kayoko Shimizu MP Secretary General JFPF - Dr. Taro Nakayama MP Chairman JFPF - Mr. Michihiko Kano MP Senior Vice Chairman JFPF

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Review of AFPPD Activities with Japanese Parliamentarians

Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit AFPPD Secretary General, Mr. Shiv Khare AFPPD Executive Director, and Ms. Hiromi Takagi AFPPD Project Associate, went to Japan to visit AFPPD Chairman Mr. Yoshio Yatsu MP Japan and Dr. Taro Nakayama Chairman of APDA and IMPO. The visit to Tokyo was organised to discuss AFPPD activities in 2003, and more specifically the Japan Trust Fund and AFPPD programme focus in 2004 as next year will see the arrival of ICPD+10. It was concluded that AFPPD should organise a number of activities in 2004 to highlight the ICPD+10. Dr. Malinee also met with Ms. Sumie Ishii newly-elected Executive Director of JOICFP and Mr. Ryoichi Suzuki



L. to R: Ms. Sumie Ishii Executive Director JOICFP - Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD Secretary General AFPPD - Mr. Ryoichi Suzuki Deputy Executive Director JOICFP



L. to R: Ms. Hiromi Takagi AFPPD Project Associate - Mr. Osamu Kusumoto Assistant Secretary General APDA - Mr. Yoshio Yatsu MP Japan AFPPD Chairman - Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit - Mr. Shiv Khare Executive Director AFPPD - Mr. Hirose Tsuguo Secretary General APDA



L. to R: Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit - Dr. Taro Nakayama MP Japan and Chair of APDA

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although Japan is experiencing financial difficulties, it also recognises the importance of population issues. The Japanese Ministry of Finance requested a reduction in ODA contribution Dr. Nakayama explained, but Japan will continue to support UNFPA despite its tight budget.

Mr. Shuichi Kato MP and Ms. Kayoko Shimizu MP, Secretary General of JPFP, wanted to know what kind of activities are being conducted in terms of improving women's status in conflict countries.

Mrs. Obaid cited examples in the Arabic region where women and their families are suffering mental and / or physical trauma due to rape and other situations brought about by conflict. She explained that UNFPA continues to support 'Security for Women' and addresses sexual violence issues in cooperation with the United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

Japanese Support for RH Activities in Iraq

Mr. Kano MP Japan, JPFP Deputy President, asked where UNFPA funds for medical services and humanitarian responses came from. Mrs. Obaid replied that the source originates from UNFPA core funds, which come partly from Japanese funds. Mrs. Obaid requested that reproductive health related activities be included as a part of Japanese support in the legislation regarding assistance to Iraq from Japan, which is currently being discussed and, so far, does not take into account reproductive health activities. Dr. Taro Nakayama JPFP Chairman agreed with Mrs. Obaid's suggestion and said that the inclusion of Japanese support to RH related issues in Iraq will be mentioned officially. JPFP members were all in agreement with this.

In conclusion Mrs. Obaid stated that UNFPA is planning to conduct a census in Afghanistan and Iraq in order to have the real statistics in hand and that UNFPA activities will also contribute to the establishment of a peaceful and democratic political system. At the end, she expressed her appreciation for Japan's cooperation ●

Mr. Shashi Tharoor.....

Under Secretary General for UN Communications and Public Information in New York visited Bangkok, Thailand, in May. In a speech at the Foreign Correspondent's Club Thailand (FCCT) on the United Nations, he said "The world faces problems that cross all frontiers such as degradation of the environment, population increase contagious diseases and chronic starvation, human rights and human wrongs, mass illiteracy and massive displacement. These are problems that no one country, however powerful, can solve on its own, and which are yet the shared responsibility of humankind. The United Nations exists to find these solutions through the common endeavour of all states. It is one indispensable global organisation in our globalising world."





How AFPPD's Support Makes a Difference: An Example

Bangkok: The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) has, since 1981, been making a concerted effort to involve, educate, and motivate parliamentarians to bring about changes in the field of population and development. The Asian Forum has employed various methods in order to do this. Here is an example:

Ms. Imelda Henkin, the then Director of the Asia Pacific Division of UNFPA, during one of her visits to AFPPD raised

◆◆◆◆◆ The Senate Committee on Public Health of Thailand under the Chairmanship of Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD took the EAW issue to heart and worked earnestly for it ◆◆◆◆◆ The Thai Women Parliamentarians' Club, supported by AFPPD, organised a national parliamentarian seminar on EAW in Parliament House, Bangkok, to discuss the issue in the Thai context and to draft legislation to tackle VAW related problems in the country. As a result of the seminar, the Thai Government decided to prepare draft legislation, which the Thai Women



Thai Women Parliamentarians' Club Meeting with UNFPA to Discuss VAW

Front Row L. to R: Dr. Chaiyos Kuananusont, HIV/AIDS and STI Advisor, UNFPA/CST Bangkok - Mr. Pornchai Suchitta, Assistant Representative, UNFPA Bangkok - Ms. Huwaidiyah Pitsuwan Useng MP Thailand - Dr. Pornpich Pattanakullert MP Thailand - Ms. Kusumalawatee MP Thailand - Senator Maleerat Kaewka - Dr. Pusadee Tamthai, Consultant, Thai Women Parliamentarians' Club

the issue of violence against women and urged AFPPD to make an effort to involve male and female parliamentarians on this issue ◆◆◆◆◆ In response to Ms. Henkin's suggestion, AFPPD organised the Inter-country Workshop for Parliamentary Advocacy for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Bangkok, on the 19th to the 21st of June 2001. In order to make the workshop more effective, cooperation was sought from UNFPA's Country Support Team in Bangkok, which provided technical and expert advice on the issue ◆◆◆◆◆ The workshop, with the help of CST, made an assessment of the VAW situation in the Asia Pacific region and a case study was prepared in order to review current legislation in the region and work out what needed to be done in this area. The workshop, which was attended by approximately sixty parliamentarians from eight countries, adopted a declaration, which called for national level legislation and reviews of existing ones.

Parliamentarians' Club considered and amended ◆◆◆◆◆ While these legislations are in various stages of progress, AFPPD assistance has been requested to involve grass root level elected representatives such as Tambon (village level) leaders, NGOs and others to educate them, seek their acceptance and motivate them to lobby other parliamentarians to accept the draft legislation. One such meeting took place very recently on the 28th of June 2003 ◆◆◆◆◆ AFPPD arranged for UNFPA and CST officers to meet with the Thai Women Parliamentarians' Club to discuss ways to make the programme for seeking grassroots support more effective. Elected representatives will accelerate the process of bringing these legislations into effect. It is to be noted that women from all political parties are involved in this process and we hope that well-suited legislation will be passed soon in Thai Parliament.

Tambon Leaders' Programme Reviewed

The Tambon Leader's programme, which focused on educating and involving village level leaders in Thailand on issues such as reproductive health, HIV/AIDS, ageing and geriatrics, was initiated last year with the support of AFPPD. In a recent evaluation meeting, it was decided that the programme was worthwhile and should be continued in other regions of Thailand this year.



L. to R: Director of Provincial Health Services, Thailand, Senator Vichit Manosittisak - Senator Lt. General Panya Yooprasert - Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit M.D, AFPPD Secretary General - Senator Maliwan Ngenmune - Senator Virapong Skolkitiwat, Director of provincial hospitals, Thailand and others.



IN Memoriam Mr. Balla Musa Silla



Mr. Balla Musa Silla

It is with profound sadness and deep regret that AFPPD informs you of the passing away of Mr. Balla Musa Silla. Mr. Silla, former Executive Director of Partners in Population and Development and a member of the board of directors of Population 2005, died June 27, 2003, at the age of 48 years after prolonged illness.

Mr. Silla was a Gambian national. He joined Partners in Population and Development in September 1996 and served as its Executive Director from May 1997 to August 2001.

Prior to his work with Partners, Mr. Silla served as the Director for Population Affairs for the Gambian Government. In addition, Mr. Silla was the recipient of several fellowships, including: the Warren Weaver Fellowship at the Population Sciences Division of the Rockefeller Foundation; the David E. Bell Fellowship at the Center for Population and Development Studies, Harvard University; and the Taro Takemi Fellowship at the Department of Population and International Health, Harvard School of Public Health. In September 2001, Mr. Silla moved to New York to join the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative as Vice-President.

Mr. Balla Silla has worked closely with the Asian Forum. As Executive Director of Partners he sponsored an Australian and New Zealand parliamentarians study visit in cooperation with the Rockefeller Foundation and AFPPD. More recently, he initiated, with AFPPD, a regional workshop on HIV vaccines, which is yet to be organised.

"It is with deep sadness that I received the tragic news of the passing of our dear friend and colleague Balla. This is absolutely unacceptable that we have to lose him at the prime of his life. It is a tremendous loss not only to his family but also to those of us who had the benefit of working closely with Balla. His dedication and commitment to work for the good of humanity will be an inspiration to us always. He has left a most enduring legacy at 'Partners' positioning the institution on a solid footing." *Ambassador Anwarul K. Chowdhury, UN Under Secretary General*

"I am deeply saddened by the news of Balla's death: ICASA 2003 participants will miss him." *Dr. D. M. Owili, Chairman ICASA 2003*

"There are never adequate words at times like this. Balla's warmth, spirit, intelligence and humour were incredibly special and touched all of us who knew him and had the privilege to work with him. We will all think of him often and will continue to be influenced by his enormous efforts at IAVI and throughout his career." *Dr. Seth Berkley, President and CEO of the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, New York*

"Some of us are left speechless very cruel. May Balla rest in peace" **Heartfelt Condolences.....** with this saddest news. The world is and God bless his family." *Ms. Sophia Mukasa Monico, Global AIDS Policy Officer, Global Health Council, USA*

"I am deeply saddened by the news of Balla's death. His warmth, intelligence, spirit and humour were Balla's signature. This made him a special person to many of us and I mourn his passing. My condolences to his colleagues at IAVI, his family and his friends." *Mr. Richard Burzynski, Executive Director, International Council of AIDS Service Organisations, Canada*

"I have had many memorable moments, shared the same concerns, and worked together to organise the South to South Symposium successfully in Tokyo. He was a good friend and advisor. I will miss him very much." *Mr. Kit Kitatani, Population 2005, Tokyo*

"The news of Balla Silla's death has left us in shock. To lose a person like him, committed to our cause, is a tragedy not only to his family, and for Population 2005, but for the entire population and development movement." *Mr. Peter Schatzer, IOM, Geneva*

"Balla was very special to the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance. He spoke eloquently at the first major event we organised at the Australian Parliament and he was a joy to have on the AFPPD Parliamentary Study Tour we undertook in Thailand and Vietnam. To me personally, he always had the time to advise me on international matters, especially concerning the Parliamentary Group, with a great deal of humour and tact." *Ms. Dianne Proctor, Chief Executive Officer, ARHA, Canberra, Australia*

"The loss of Balla is truly a great loss for so many of us individually and for the world as whole. A wonderful human being." *Ms. Isabelle Claxton, IAVI, USA*

"Mr. Balla Musa Silla was a bright and warm person who touched the hearts of all those who knew him. He will be greatly missed by AFPPD, and population and HIV/AIDS workers the world over." *Mr. Shiv Khare, Executive Director AFPPD*





Australian MP Meets with Thai Parliamentarians

Mrs. Annette Ellis MP Australia and Shadow Minister on Ageing and Disability and member of the Australian All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development was in Bangkok on the 1st of July. She visited the AFPPD office and met with Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD Secretary General of AFPPD and other Thai Parliamentarians at a luncheon meeting.



Back Row: L. to R: Mr. Shiv Khare, Executive Director AFPPD - Senator Nirun Phitakwatchara MD - Senator Prateep Ungsongtham - Senator Chit Charoenprasert MD Front Row: L. to R: Senator Maleerat Kaewka - Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit MD Secretary General of AFPPD - Mrs. Annette Ellis MP Australia - Ms. Huwaidiyah Pitsuwan Useng MP

Abortion on the High Seas

The world's first floating abortion clinic, which briefly went to Ireland from the Netherlands in 2001, is to risk the wrath of the Catholic Church again by dropping anchor off Poland. In a move certain to enrage anti-abortion campaigners, a three-strong medical team will seek to circumvent Polish laws and offer free abortion pills, contraception and counselling to Polish women. The Amsterdam group 'Women on Waves' says it has the permission of the Dutch Health Ministry to offer the services. It has argued that Dutch law applies on a Dutch ship if it is in international waters. Patients will be taken to the Polish port of Wladyslawowo, then twelve miles out into the Baltic Sea, where Dutch law will take effect. In Poland, abortion is only allowed as a last resort, after rape or for health reasons, for instance. A spokeswoman for Women on Waves, Ms. Jeanette Kruseman, said that 200,000 illegal abortions were performed in the country every year.

Accurate estimates for the number of abortions performed annually in Poland are notoriously difficult to make. According to the National Federation for Woman and Family Planning (FKiPR), around 80,000 abortions are conducted each year. Other estimates put this figure as high as 200,000.

New Population Ordinance in Vietnam



In Vietnam previous focus on population policies has been placed predominantly on fertility reduction through the implementation of family planning. Very

little attention has been given to population structure, quality and distribution. Due to the importance of such issues in sustaining national development, the Vietnamese Government has decided to bring into effect a 'Population Ordinance.'

This Population Ordinance, effective as of May 1st this year, includes seven chapters and forty articles. It clearly identifies strictly forbidden acts such as preventing or forcing family planning practice; foetal sex selection in any form; producing, trading, importing and providing counterfeit contraceptives, contraceptives of poor quality, expired products and those without distribution permits.

Two aspects of the exercise of reproductive rights are highlighted in the Ordinance. On one hand, citizens have the right to decide the timing, number and spacing of births and the right to be informed. On the other, citizens should be responsible for their children, families and society at present and in the future.

Quick Fact

- ◆ Currently, an estimated one in twenty teenagers worldwide contracts an STD each year

A Brisbane woman is reluctantly going ahead with an unwanted pregnancy after pro-lifers gave her and her husband \$1,000 to cancel an abortion, a counselling agency said yesterday. The middle-aged couple who already have a young family, were stopped by a group of pro-lifers as they approached the Marie Stopes clinic in Brisbane four weeks ago, Ms. Cait Calcutt of Brisbane's 'Children by Choice' said. The couple, who wanted an anonymous, \$1,000 to not go ahead with the abortion. They were given 'false and misleading information' about the effects of an abortion on future fertility, complications associated with the procedure and the risk of breast cancer," Ms. Calcutt said. The couple, who have had financial difficulties, accepted the money, dropping the planned abortion. But two weeks later, the woman went to Children by Choice for counselling. Children by Choice and Marie Stopes International believe that this is the first time the tactic of using money to dissuade women from having an abortion has been used in Australia. Both condemned it.

\$1,000 to Cancel Abortion

Erratum: Dhaka Meeting on VAW

In the last edition of the AFPPD newsletter (March -April 2003) on page three, Ms. Geetanjali Singh was quoted as having said 'to be a woman in South Asia is to be a non-person.' Ms. Singh has since informed us that this was incorrect. Her quote, which she took from Mr. Mehbub Ul Huq, should have read as follows: **'while growing up in South Asia is a struggle, to a be a woman in this region is a to be a non person. Women bear the greatest burden of human deprivation in South Asia.'** She also informed us that, also on page three, the line 'VAW is one of history's great silences' should read **'VAW in conflict is one of history's great silences.'**



UNFPA Calls on World Leaders to Ensure Safe Motherhood for All Women - Mrs. Thoraya Obaid UNFPA Executive Director

"Whether in New York, Nashville or Nairobi, every woman should enjoy a healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth," said Mrs. Thoraya Obaid UNFPA Executive Director. "Yet today one woman dies every minute from pregnancy related complications and this is unacceptable."

Women's Health Top Priority



Mrs. Thoraya Obaid

"As mothers are honoured in the United States with cards and presents to symbolise their importance, let us also remember women in other countries, for whom pregnancy and childbirth is often life-threatening," said Mrs. Obaid. "There is an urgent need to make the health of women a top priority and to devote the necessary resources to save women's lives."

Maternal Mortality Remains High

Many health indicators have improved in recent years but maternal mortality and morbidity remain alarmingly high. Worldwide, the disparity in maternal health between rich and poor countries is the widest of all health indicators.

"While the average obstetrician in the United States is unlikely to see a single maternal death in his or her entire career, complications of pregnancy and childbirth remain the leading cause of death and disability for women aged 15 to 49 in many poor countries," Mrs. Obaid said. "The lifetime risk of dying during pregnancy and childbirth is 1 in 16 in the world's poorest nations compared to less than 1 in 3,700 in the United States."

UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, supports safe motherhood interventions in more than 140 countries—through reproductive health programmes executed with local and international partners. The three-pronged strategy focuses on voluntary family planning, skilled attendance at birth and emergency obstetric care.

Half a Million Women Die Annually through Pregnancy and Childbirth Complications

"Maternal mortality claims over half a million women's lives each year. Nearly all these lives could be saved if affordable, good-quality obstetric care were available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week," Mrs. Obaid said. "When women experience complications during pregnancy and childbirth, and 15 per cent of all pregnant women do, access to emergency obstetric care means the difference between life and death."

Most of the deaths are caused by haemorrhage, obstructed labour, infection, unsafe abortion, and eclampsia, which is pregnancy-related hypertension. Other indirect causes are malaria, anaemia and HIV/AIDS.

"Half of all HIV infections today are among women and many of these women are mothers," said Mrs. Obaid. One of the top priorities of UNFPA is HIV prevention. "Preventing HIV infection among pregnant women ensures that the mothers remain healthy and their babies do too."

She challenged the United States Administration to further demonstrate its commitment to saving women's lives by resuming its funding for UNFPA. The U.S. Government decided last July to withdraw \$34 million in Congress-approved funds due to allegations that UNFPA supports forced abortions in China. But three fact-finding missions, including one handpicked by the U.S. State Department, found no evidence of such claims and recommended that the funding be released.

\$1 Million Raised for UNFPA

"The American people themselves have voiced their support for UNFPA and global women's health through a grassroots campaign that has raised more than \$1 million since last July," she said. The 34 Million Friends campaign was started independently by two American citizens: Jane Roberts of California and Lois Abraham of New Mexico. More than 100,000 American citizens have contributed to the campaign.

C A R F O O N

C O R N E R



AFPPD 51st Executive Committee Meeting in New Delhi

AFPPD will hold its 51st Executive Committee meeting on the 2nd of August in conjunction with the South Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on HIV/AIDS in New Delhi, India. Executive Committee members will convene to review AFPPD events in year 2002 to 2003, consider membership with Iran and Lao/PDR, and renewal of Pakistan's membership as well as discuss AFPPD's future programmes and other issues of interest.



Interview with Mr. Martyn Jones MP UK

In our series of interviews with MPs associated with AFPPD programmes, our Editorial Associate Ms. Mikaela Lock met with Mr. Martyn Jones MP from the United Kingdom. Mr Jones, a member of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group provided a good insight into the reproductive health situation in the UK and what the UK is doing to tackle domestic population and development issues.

1. Domestically, what is at the top of the UK social agenda in relation to population and development?

"I would have to say that tackling teenage pregnancy is a top priority. I am not sure about the rest of the world, but I do know that Britain has the highest rate of teenage pregnancy in Europe. This is a quite a problem in the UK and one that is particularly difficult to solve. The best way to address it is probably through sex education, however, I think it is fair to say that in this instance sex education has failed: the statistics speak for themselves! There are of course social factors that contribute to and perpetuate this vicious circle. In the UK, certain young girls would not consider becoming pregnant a disaster, indeed it could be seen as advantageous as the State provides many benefits to young mothers including their own apartment and monthly payments in the form of child benefits. There is no financial disincentive to ensure young girls stop getting pregnant and the cycle is unlikely to break unless attitudes change."

"Doctors should not be taking a moral stance when it comes to helping adolescents with RH issues"

2. You mentioned that sex education had failed. Can you explain exactly what you meant by that?

"I think it is the way information is being passed on to young people that has made sex education fail

in this instance. Having spoken to numerous people about this very issue, I get the impression that the system is simply not being directed accordingly. The information is there, it is the dissemination of that information that is inadequate."

3. What is at the top of the UK social agenda internationally?

"That would be HIV/AIDS and reproductive health. Clare Short the UK Secretary of State made poverty eradication her main aim, but I think ensuring implementation of the Cairo Programme of Action is the best way forward. We do not have the funds available to solve economic problems, but if we can provide developing countries with the ability to control their own fertility then at least they will have a head start in terms of their own development."

4. What type of population and reproductive health programmes are running in the UK?

"Yes, the UK has very good reproductive health programmes with a good number of clinics, particularly in the cities. Problems do arise, however, at the general practitioner's level, (doctors). It seems that many family doctors are reluctant to provide RH services to teenagers under 16 without involving their parents. If a young person is motivated enough then they can easily have access to RH services: it is unfortunate that the first port of call is usually the family doctor. This is the main flaw in the system I think."

5. Do you feel that doctors should worry about helping people under sixteen?

Doctors should not be taking a moral stance. If young people have gone to the doctors to obtain RH services then they should be treated as being responsible adults rather than potentially breaking the law.



6. Do you think the British public is adequately aware of the dangers of HIV/AIDS?

I think probably yes. The campaigns that took place about ten years ago greatly helped and the level of awareness has increased significantly due to these campaigns. There is a good understanding among the public that condoms are the best protection against HIV/AIDS and other STIs.

7. Within the House of Commons there is a parliamentarians' committee on HIV/AIDS. What sort of programmes and activities does the committee conduct?

The HIV/AIDS committee runs its programmes and has activities very similar to those of the UK All Party Parliamentary Group. Both the HIV/AIDS Committee and the UK All Party Parliamentary Group are really issue raising bodies within parliament. We go about it through debates, early day motions, and parliamentary questions: basically we use all the various means there are to push these issues into the light. I am a member of the HIV/AIDS Committee, albeit a non-active one, but having attended some of their functions, I can say that the majority of the committee's activities constitute meetings and discussions with people prominent in the HIV/AIDS field.

"There is only so much Government can do on VAW. However, increased funding for shelters would be a step in the right direction"

8. Do you think that parliamentarians in the UK focus enough on violence against women?

To the extent that there is still violence against women, then no, we don't focus enough on VAW. However, there is only a certain amount Government can do on the issue. Perhaps increased funding to set-up more shelters for abused women would be a step in the right direction although quite unlikely. There are quite a lot of shelters around the country already funded by local authorities. It's a yes and no answer.

9. What is the ratio of male parliamentarians to female parliamentarians?

There are 659 members of parliament in the UK. We, (the



labour party), have a fairly good ratio. We have 410 members of which 94 are women, so that is around 25%. But if you take into account the other parties, the number of women decreases significantly. I think with all the other parties included, there are only 118 women.



10. So do you think there should be more female parliamentarians?

I know that there are some very capable women out there, but unfortunately making it to parliament is difficult. I think that gender shouldn't come into it. What is important is a good MP and as to whether that MP is female or male is irrelevant.

11. Which factors do you think have a negative impact on population and development programmes?

Domestically we do have a problem with anti-abortion lobbying, the Society for the Protection of Unborn Children, (SPUC), is particularly active. Some members of the House of Commons are also very anti-choice. And of course there is always the problem of finding adequate funds for population and development programmes.

12. What do you think AFPPD could do to increase motivation among parliamentarians and keep them interested in population and development issues?

AFPPD is doing a very good job already and sets a very good example to other parliamentary networks. I think the best way to encourage other groups and motivate members of parliament to be active is to spread best practices around. One of the greatest hurdles to overcome would be finding a method of working suited to all parliaments, which are highly diverse in their day-to-day functions. AFPPD should try and analyse each parliament, establish how they function, and then suggest effective ways that MPs could work on population and development issues ■

South Asian Parliamentarians' Workshop to be Held in New Delhi

The Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD) will be organising a South Asian parliamentarians' workshop on HIV/AIDS in cooperation with AFPPD and UNFPA in New Delhi, India on the 1st and 2nd of August 2003. The workshop will review the HIV/AIDS situation in the region and discuss related issues including the underlying social, cultural and economic factors that deprive individuals of the power to protect themselves from HIV infection. Themes to be covered include; advocacy role of parliamentarians as a response to HIV/AIDS; Status of HIV/AIDS and STDs in the SAARC countries; preventative programmes; and policies, programmes and legislative work on HIV/AIDS amongst others.

Capacity-Building of Parliamentarian Committees' Staff

Following the success of last year's training course for national committee staff, the AFPPD has decided to organise another training course for 2003. National committee staff are responsible for advocacy with parliamentarians on population and development issues and in order for them to implement and improve this advocacy, it is essential they are equipped with various management and administrative skills as well as possess the necessary tools for planning, initiating and conducting advocacy projects.

AFPPD's training course, which will be organised in cooperation with UNFPA/CST, will take place in Bangkok from the 21st to the 26th of July at the Dusit Thani hotel in Bangkok. The training course will offer generic skills that will be useful in the management of parliamentary advocacy at the national level.

Did You Know?

- ◆ If food were distributed equally, every man, woman, and child would receive 2,700 calories a day, more than the minimum needed for basic survival.
- ◆ Only 1 percent of world income - \$40 billion - would provide universal access to basic education, reproductive health, family planning, and safe water and sanitation for all.

Happy Birthday Dr. Prasop!

Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn, Chairperson of the Advisory Committee of the Senate Committee on Public Health, Thailand, and former Secretary General of AFPPD celebrated his birthday on the 24th of April. Dr. Prasop remains as dynamic as ever. AFPPD held a special luncheon to celebrate his birthday. Among the guests were Senator Malinee Sukavejworakit M.D. and AFPPD Secretary General; Senator Chit Charoenprasert M.D; Mr. Richard Kalina, WHO; Senator Virapong Sakolkitiwat; Senator Maliwan Ngenmune; and Dr. Udom Chantharaksri, Deputy Dean of Research, Mahidol University.





Revised Calendar of AFPPD Events

In light of the SARS outbreak, the Asian Forum has had to review its annual schedule of activities and events. Below is a revised table detailing new dates and venues for AFPPD functions 2003.

DATES	
PAST EVENTS	
7 – 8 February	AFPPD Standing Committee on Food Security, Bangkok Thailand
18 – 19 March	Regional Workshop on Parliamentary Advocacy for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, Dhaka, Bangladesh
UPCOMING EVENTS	
21 – 25 July	Regional Management Training Course on Advocacy for National Committee Staff, Bangkok, Thailand
1 – 2 August	South Asian Parliamentarians Seminar on HIV/AIDS, New Delhi, India
2 August	The 51 st AFPPD Executive Committee Meeting, New Delhi, India
3 - 12 August	Japanese Parliamentarians Study Visit to South Africa organised by APDA in cooperation with AFPPD and FAAPPD
1 October	AFPPD Standing Committee on Women, Manila, the Philippines
2 – 3 October	Asian Women Parliamentarians' Conference on the Empowerment of Women, Manila, the Philippines
12 - 13 October	Asia-Pacific Parliamentarians' Seminar jointly organised by APDA and AFPPD, Ho-Chi-Minh City, Vietnam
29 - 31 October	Inter-Country Parliamentarians' Workshop on HIV/AIDS with a focus on vaccine cooperation with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative USA (IAVI), Bangkok, Thailand
6 - 8 December	International Medical Parliamentarians' Conference on Family Health, Bangkok, Thailand
TENTATIVE	
Dates to be finalised	4 th Central Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Food Security, Water and Population, Dushanbe City, Tajikistan
Dates to be finalised	Advocacy for HIV/AIDS Prevention among Young People in Asia and the Pacific, Bali, Indonesia

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