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FORUM NEWSLETTER

Publication of Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

IPCI 2006 International Parliamentarians Conference
ICPD on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action

Parliamentarians Pledged to Attain at least 10% of Development Budgets for Population and Reproductive Health Programmes.



300 Parliamentarians and others from over 100 countries gathered in Bangkok, Thailand, from the 21-22 November 2006 at the United Nations Conference Centre, for the third International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD. The opening ceremony of the two day conference was officiated over by Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn of Thailand. Her Royal Highness was welcomed to the conference and introduced to participants objectives by Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, Chairman of AFPPD, Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA and Mr. Meechai Ruchuphan, President, National Assembly of Thailand.

Her Royal Highness Princess Maha Chakri Sirindhorn addressed the gathered participants and spoke of the role of parliamentarians in their respective countries, the difficulties involved in development work and her hopes for cooperation and sustainable development. "Previous conferences have brought to life



Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn addressing the parliamentarians gathered for the opening ceremony of the Bangkok IPCI/ICPD conference. Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, Ms. Thoraya Obaid and Mr. Meechai Ruchuphan reporting to Her Royal Highness Maha Chakri Sirindhorn.

collective agreements aimed at furthering sustainable development in the realms of economic growth, social processes, environmental protection, and the roles of parliamentarians in each country in the capacity of a bridge between citizens and government in reinforcing such policies in order to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Development work is a difficult task, and it would take a great amount of time in order that success is accomplished. Therefore, those who work in the field of development must

hold dear perseverance, virtues, and honesty. In order to gain trust from other people, those who work in the field of development must be ready to cooperate with others and, more importantly, they must have sufficient information to work in an effective manner. I hope that all of you would cooperate with one another in political, economic, and social aspects as well as would be determined to assure that development is sustainable and natural resources would be protected for the benefit of posterity."



After the meeting was officially opened, participants were introduced to the themes to be explored throughout the conference by Ms. Safiye agar, Director of the IERD, UNFPA. She used the opportunity to remind participants that this meeting was not only a way of moving forward together in partnership, but also should be developed as a tool so that participants can effectively "take stock of the progress made since the Cairo conference."



"Our efforts are preventing the situation from deteriorating, but we are not yet improving it."

- Ms. Safiye agar

Ms. agar made a point of acknowledging great achievements made by parliamentarians resulting from the commitments made at the two previous IPCI/ICPD conferences, and further, the acceptance by Global leaders at the World Summit in 2005 of the recommendation that universal access to reproductive health should be an indicator of successfully reaching the MDGs; although, these were tempered with the reality of the present situation and the fact that we are no closer to reaching the ICPD goals set out for 2015. "Our efforts are preventing the situation from deteriorating, but we are not yet improving it...we cannot halve extreme poverty by 2015 if we cannot save women's lives today." Ms. agar went on to highlight the information gathered from the Global Survey of parliamentarians that UNFPA with support from the regional parliamentarian groups conducted for release at the Bangkok IPCI/ICPD for assessment and discussion.

Ms. agar concluded by stating several actions inspired from the parliamentarians responses to the Global Survey, which includes the need for more and better information, training in advocacy and additional support from UNFPA and other donors. Ms. agar ended her address by calling Parliamentarians to action and reminding them of what could be accomplished over the course of the conference.



"Key to achieving the ICPD and Millenium Goals and MDGs is empowerment men and women alike."

- Mr. Kim Hak-Su

Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of UNESCAP, in his keynote address expressed to the Parliamentarians, especially in the Asia-Pacific Region, that they have helped make sure population and development issues are taken seriously by the governments in the region, and reproductive health has now been recognised as a human right. He also stated that "the key to achieving the ICPD Goals and the MDGs is the empowerment of people, men and women alike. While investing in people is central to development, it is equally important to create an enabling environment that will help individuals develop and utilise their full potential." Mr. Hak-Su conveyed the point that ICPD marked an important visionary change, as it articulated the close links between sustainable development, reproductive health and gender equality, with no less than 179 countries agreeing to meet the needs for education and health, with reproductive health as a prerequisite. "Continued advocacy on the importance of population and development with senior planners

and policy makers, parliamentarians and legislators, and other influential personalities is essential to sustain the favourable environment that is steadily emerging," he told the parliamentarians.



"...you can transform the voices of the people into action by governments."

- Ms. Thoraya Obaid

Ms. Thoraya Obaid applauded the Parliamentarian groups' work on population and development, saying that since the Cairo conference, they have had a positive affect on government policy in many countries of the world, although greater efforts are still needed to strengthen reproductive health services and the prevention of HIV/AIDS globally. She added that this was stressed in the results of the global survey prepared especially for this conference in cooperation with parliamentarian groups.

Ms. Obaid went on to stress to the parliamentarians five key areas that need to be addressed. (1) There needs to be increased investment in sexual and reproductive health, including family planning; (2) universal access to reproductive health, in-line with the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), needs to be an immediate target; (3) sexual and reproductive health has to be linked to HIV/AIDS prevention programmes; (4) stronger action needs to be taken to prevent and respond to violence against women; and (5) build a bridge with women, youth and other civil society groups to promote a better understanding of the ICPD Programme of Action, which can counter opposition and promote accountability, and therefore promoting greater progress in reaching the

"Ensure that the new target on universal access to reproductive health is immediately and fully integrated into national development strategies and is given highest priority in the plans, implementation and monitoring of relevant government ministries."

Millennium Development goals, with their direct link to ICPD. In closing Ms. Obaid appealed to the parliamentarians, "The role of parliamentary leaders has been critical so far," adding, "you have the power to make a difference – you can transform the voices of the people into action by governments."



"NGOs, like the Member Associations of IPPF, are there to share your vision and achieve it."
-Dr. Gill Greer

Dr. Gill Greer addressed the conference as the head of the International Planned Parenthood

Federation, reiterated to those parliamentarians gathered, that women were and still are "bearing the brunt" of poor reproductive health services. In saying this, she also recognised that with the advocacy and the time invested by many parliamentarians, reproductive health had been re-established as an essential part of any global architecture for development, and that the heart of the Cairo agenda could still, through this recognition, be achieved. That good reproductive health rights are essential component in the fight to eliminate poverty and in the empowerment of women. Dr. Greer stressed that when HIV and AIDS and maternal mortality and morbidity are put together they are eroding the development gains countries have struggled so hard to achieve. She drew the parliamentarian's attention to a research which demonstrates clearly that a relatively small investment in reproductive health would make such a difference to the lives of young men, women and children and to every country's social capital. She went on to say that this investment requires

strong, yet compassionate political leadership which recognises both the individual tragedy behind the situation and the collective economic loss to every community and developing country.

"The necessity of partnerships with civil society, in particular NGOs are essential". IPPF, which is one of the largest international NGOs with 151 Member Associations working in 180 countries, who has the benefit of the experience and credibility of these member associations and others like it, are that have grown from a real need within their communities. "Their knowledge of these communities and their service delivery, particularly with the most marginalised and socially-excluded, informs their advocacy, gives them credibility, and enables them to play a key role in the planning and implementation of the steps that need to be taken in order to turn the promise offered by these new opportunities into the realities which change lives. NGOs, like the Member Associations of IPPF, are there to share your vision and achieve it."

International Parliamentarians Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action

Ministers Taking Stock of Progress Since Cairo



Session moderator Mr. Alain Destexhe addressing the meeting, with Chinese Minister Mr. Zhang Weiqing, National Population and Family Planning Commission; Bolivian Minister of Governance Ms. Alicia Mu oz Al and the Chair of the Session Mr. Fukuda, MP, Japan on the panel.

The session on Special Guest Statements was moderated by Mr. Alain Destexhe, Senator (Belgium) and President of PGA. Acting in the role of Chair, Mr. Fukuda introduced the speakers and facilitated the exchange of views from the floor. Presenting in the session were Mr. Zhang Weiqing, Minister, National Population and Family Planning Commission, China; Ms. Alicia Mu oz Al, Minister of Governance, Bolivia and Mr. Nassour Guelengdouksia Ouaidou, President of the National Assembly, Chad.

China Implementing ICPD

Mr. Zhang Weiqing spoke of the efforts of the Chinese government since 1994. This effort has focused on the implementation of ICPD Programme of Action, with the Chinese population and family planning. The government

resolutely implemented reform effectively transformed working mentality and approaches of population and family planning programs; and vigorously promoted coordinated and sustainable development of population, economy, society, resources and environment. Some of

the impressive achievements of the action include the rapid development of the national economy, the effective slow down of population growth, stabilisation of the total fertility rate at 1.8, transform the pattern of reproductive health, mitigating population pressure on the resources and environment, leading to the promotion of socio-economic development, and the enhancement of overall national strength and improvement of people's livelihood. Mr. Zhang Weiqing summarised that with the multi-polarization of the world and further economic globalization, friendship, peace, cooperation and development have become the tide of our era. Heads of states and governments, gathered at the 2005 World Summit, made a solemn commitment to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015, promoting gender equality and eliminating discrimination against women and girls. The commitment reaffirmed the vital role of RH/FP in the realization of MDGs.

"Mobilize our governments to support the adoption of indicators by Member States of the United Nations to monitor the target of universal access to reproductive health by 2015 and to use those indicators as soon as they are adopted, supplemented by additional programme indicators responsive to national needs."

Bangkok Statement - IPCI/ICPD



Chinese Commitment

He concluded by saying that the Chinese government will, as always, earnestly perform its international commitments; stand by the principles of equality, mutual benefit, with a focus on real effects, long-term cooperation and common development. China will take the path of peaceful development; and further enhance and expand communication and cooperation with countries in all regions in the world in population and development areas – and “that we will endeavor towards the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, the realization of the MDGs, and the construction of a harmonious world of lasting peace and common prosperity.”

Africa Needs to Catch Up

Hon. Nassour Guelengdouksia Ouaidou began by giving a thorough analysis of the situation in Africa, and stating up front, that Africa is far behind in reaching the goals set out by Cairo and those of the MDGs. He highlighted poverty, which affects 44% to 46% of the population, and the lack of education efforts towards the disparities between girls and boys, between countries and between geographical areas in each country. Africa is not only impacted by high rates of maternal and infantile morbidity and mortality, the prevalence of HIV/AIDS and related deaths, which is much higher when compared to other continents, but also other issues including access to drinking water, natural disasters, conflicts and wars in Africa and the low performance of economic and social policies. His speech also involved the unfavourable governance, political and legal environment, that made meeting the MDGs a difficult task.



Hon. Leon Bio Bigou, MP from Benin and Parliamentarians from Bhutan discussing issues with the panel of Ministers.



African Achievements

Despite this, Hon. Nassour Guelengdouksia Ouaidou went on to state the parliamentary achievements, including the creation of the Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development in 1997 and the Speakers of Parliament Conference in Chad, in May 2005. At this meeting, a Declaration was adopted as a reference point of their work in implementing the ICPD action plan. A Coordination Committee for African Networks on population and development was established. Their mission is in part, the strengthening of the National Networks of Parliaments and the harmonization of their views on population and development issues, as well as to contribute to the dialogue, ideas, experiences and knowledge exchanges between parliamentarians and other representatives of the civil society.

Recommendations Will Help

In closing Hon Nassour Guelengdouksia Ouaidou, shared with the parliamentarians some of the recommendations which will be addressed in order to help Africa progress towards meeting the Cairo goals and the MDGs by 2015, including

budget allocations for development partners, as well as individual governments. He also mentioned the UNFPA and its role in furthering technical capacity building of parliamentary group's as well sourcing and compiling necessary basic population data. His final point focused on the importance of increasing collaboration with key actors such as traditional and religious leaders, to take into account the cultural aspects of the various approaches taken to reach the ICPD goals.

20th Anniversary of the UNESCAP Population Journal

The Population Division and now population section of ESCAP have been pioneers in the development of population programs within the region, and their population journal is the only journal which provides evidence based research articles written by eminent population scientists. The Journal has completed 20 years and the IPCI/ICPD welcome reception given by the President of the Thai National Assembly was a suitable occasion to celebrate and launch the special commemorative issue of the ESCAP Asia-Pacific Population Journal on its twentieth anniversary. Mr. Kim Hak-Su, Executive Secretary of the United Nations Economic Social Commission of Asia and the Pacific (UNESCAP) and Ms. Thoraya Obaid the Executive Director, UNFPA, both showered the journal with praise and narrated the contribution it has made over the last 20 years.



To View a copy of the journal please visit the UNESCAP website:
<http://www.unescap.org>



Left: Hon Nassour Guelengdouksia Ouaidou in his speech to the parliamentarians during the Session on Ministers taking stock. Right: Hon. Odette Nyiramilimo, MP, Rwanda, addressing the panel during the discussion of the session.

“Work closely with our national authorities to ensure that the reform processes being undertaken in the United Nations protect, promote and enhance sensitive mandates such as population, gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and that these areas are recognized as central to the support of the United Nations for national development.”

Photo Gallery of IPCI/ICPD Participants



Parliamentarians from Cambodia and Burundi



Parliamentarian from Pakistan entering into discussion during the Regional group session, and parliamentarian from Palau



Prof. Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn, pointing out pictures in the AFPPD display to Hon. Tuenjai Detes, Member National Legislative Assembly, Thailand and Ms. Wanphen Sreshthaputra, UNESCAP



Parliamentarians from India during the Regional group discussion



Left to Right: Gen. Charan Kullavanijaya and Ms. Potjane Thanavarant, Vice-Presidents, Mr. Meechai Ruchuphan, President, NLA, Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, AFPPD Sec-Gen.



Steve Chadwick, MP, New Zealand; Gill Greer, Director General, IPPF; Neil Datta, Secretary, EPF; Jill Pettis, MP, New Zealand; and Eileen Kelly, Regional Coordinator, APA.



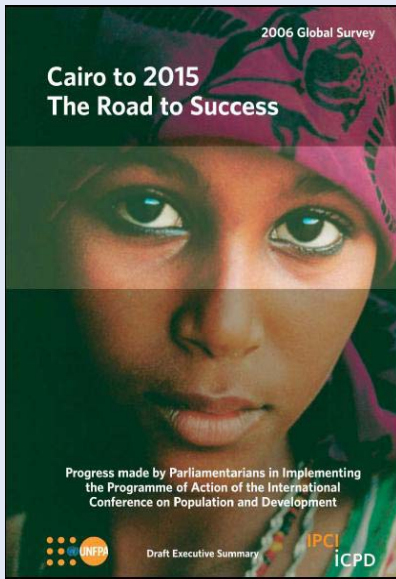
Parliamentarians from Viet Nam



Panel of the Inter-American Discussion Group: Ms. Carla Rivera-Avni, Executive Director, IAPG, Hon. Senator Maria Cristina Perceval, Argentina

"Ensure that when laws are passed and or policies adopted they are implemented. We must further ensure that laws and policies include a provision for reporting to the parliament on the progress of implementation."

Regions Discuss Global Survey



The *Global Survey* of parliamentarians was an initiative of UNFPA in cooperation with the four regional parliamentary groups (AFPPD, EPF, FAAPPD, and IAPG), which sought to take a closer look at the successes and constraints in the work of parliamentarians and their governments towards the goals set out in the previous two IPCI/ICPD meetings held in Strasbourg (2004) and Ottawa (2002), in order to better chart a way forward. UNFPA conducted the survey worldwide between April and August 2006, and obtained a response from parliamentarians in 103 countries and one regional institution (European Parliament). The result was a representative sense of their perceptions of the current situation, and the opportunities and challenges that exist today.

In Bangkok, each regional group had the opportunity to discuss the key findings of the global survey and to set out long term goals that they as parliamentarians should aim for in efforts to achieve the ICPD goals and MDGs by 2015. In stating short term objectives through these regional sessions, regional plans of action and measurable benchmarks were created, that will ensure that progress is being made. A summary of the regional group discussions follows, and in this we can see some of what each region hopes to achieve in the short term, as they collectively work towards achieving the MDGs. The process was assisted by the nomination of a Chair, and support by a resource person from the UNFPA.

ASIA AND PACIFIC

Involvement of Political Parties to be Pursued

In the development of short term objectives, the Asia and Pacific Region identified a number of key measurables that they thought should be achieved by the next IPCI/ICPD meeting to be held in 2009. Underpinning their thinking was the aim that all objectives should be set against measurable benchmarks as a clear and transparent way to track achievements against the MDGs, and that all movement forward should be within the context of a Regional Plan of Action. The focus of these benchmarks and of their regional plan included the need to upscale and mobilize resources, and include Economic Indicators, MMR/IMR and Literacy goals, with a particular focus on organisational management systems and emerging issues. They went on to identify some of these emerging issues to include Youth, Ageing, Trafficking, and Migration.

Additionally, the regional group identified the need to enact a new legislation that comprehensively address these objectives, through the involvement of all political parties. Highlighting this as a particularly



Mr Sultan Aziz, Director Asia Pacific Division, UNFPA, Resourcing the Discussion on the Global Survey outcomes for the Asia and Pacific Region, with Hon. Yasuo Fukuda, MP, Japan, as Chair and Mr. Osamu Kusumoto.

challenging task in this region, was the preclusive statement "Where such legislation is not repugnant to the existing traditions and religious sensibilities". The Asia and Pacific group was chaired by Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, MP, Japan and the resource person was Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director Asia Pacific Division, UNFPA.

ARAB STATES

All States to Have a National Committee

The Arab States set out clear measurable benchmarks to achieve their aims over the next three (3) years. They include an increase in the number of parliamentarians on committees on population and

development; an increase in National budgets to allocate specific resources for ICPD and an increase in the visibility of issues relating to Gender Based Violence (GBV), HIV/AIDS and Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) in official statements and media reports. These benchmarks will be achieved through the establishment of National Committees on population and development in all Arab States, the activation and strengthening of Regional Parliamentary forums on Population and development and the drafting of legislation on HIV/AIDS, GBV, SRH, RR, and youth issues with a view to their enactment and implementation.

Specifically, activities that will be undertaken to achieve these objectives include: the establishment of a

"Build networks, coalitions and partnerships with our parliamentary colleagues, government officials, local NGOs and individuals in order to create the political will and build the mass support needed to overcome opposition and to clarify misperceptions about population and reproductive health issues."



Hon Khira Lagna, MP, Tunisia; Ms. Fama Hane-Ba, Director, Africa Division, UNFPA; Hon. Senator Maria Cristina Perceval, Argentina and Hon. Ruth Genner, MP, Switzerland, Chairing the Regional groups discussions on the outcomes of the Global Survey for the Arab States, Africa, America and Europe Respectively.

dialogue/debate among parliamentarians on religious and cultural obstacles to the advancement of the objectives of the ICPD; the provisions of training workshops for the capacity development of Parliamentarians around ICPD advocacy; making information available through policy briefing, awareness and media campaigns on the ICPD and its aims; and specific activities to facilitate the cooperation and sharing of information between parliamentarians at both regional and national levels. This group was chaired by Ms. Khira Lagna, MP, Tunisia and was resourced by Mr. Alaadin Morsy, Director, DASECA, UNFPA.

AFRICA

Need for Gender and Youth Sensitive Budgets

The African regional meeting clearly identified the Measurable Benchmark of achieving 10% of National resources to be allocated to Reproductive Health and Population programmes by the next IPCI/IPCD meeting in 2009. The session was chaired by H.E. Nassour Guelengdousksia Ouaido, President National Assembly, Chad and Ms. Fama Hane-Ba, Director, Africa Division, UNFPA was the resource person. To achieve this goal, a series of activities were set out and were underpinned by the need to focus on effective parliamentary oversight to monitor the implementation of all commitments and laws enacted. In addition to this, the group highlighted the need for a gender and youth sensitive budget to address gender disparity. The Regional Meeting surmised that this effective

parliamentary oversight will facilitate the achievement of their activities. These include the enactment of a Gender Based Violence Bill, a Tax Levy of 3% for HIV/AIDS treatment and services, the provision of scholarships for Girl Children; and a continuation of the Fight Against Drugs. The group went on to discuss activities that encourage the creation of employment and the improvement of medical facilities. As a group, they also sought to increase the capacity of their fellow parliamentarians around issues raised by the MDGs, and to continue to do this through an exchange of information and sharing of experiences. The African Regional Group hopes that through these activities, they will be able to achieve a targeted increase in resource allocation through the enactment of appropriate legislation and that, in turn, this will lead to a favourable

environment (including good governance, conflict prevention and peace building) through which the ICPD goals and MDGs may be achieved.

AMERICA

Contraception Advocacy the Way Forward

The Inter-American group specifically dealt with the situation of Religious rights during their regional group discussion session, and in particular the smaller Catholic groups putting pressure on people about the use of artificial contraceptives. It was also noted that if people are educated then they use some kind of contraception. However, those who live below the poverty line are more inclined to the leadership and beliefs of the church,

Main Conclusions of the Global Survey

1. The need for greater interaction with other parliamentarians at national and regional levels
2. The need to link the ICPD agenda to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and to provide better monitoring of country progress
3. The overwhelming need for information
4. The need for strategies to overcome religious and cultural opposition
5. Developing country parliamentarians need more training, while donor country parliamentarians benefit from meetings and study tours.
6. The need for more HIV/AIDS laws
7. The need to address regional disparities in enacting ICPD-related laws
8. The need for developing country parliamentarians to focus on increasing budget allocations for ICPD issues
9. The need to increase gender awareness and gender balance
10. The need to strengthen the implementation of laws and policies
11. The need for increased financial and material support from UNFPA and the regional groups

"Advance awareness of, and legislation and policy to address, the linkages between people, reproductive health and the environment, including the need for sustainable production and consumption patterns, sustainable and equitable natural resources use, and measures to prevent environmental degradation and to take action on climate change."

Bangkok Statement - IPCI/IPCD

This is the group that needs to be targeted. The parliamentarians were of the view that information, education and other advocacy efforts to be enhanced, including efforts towards a large number of elected representatives at the local level. The Group also discussed and proposed other objectives around HIV/AIDS, budget allocations and other RH commodities. The discussion was chaired by Maria Cristina Perceval, MP, Argentina, with the resource person Ms. Carla Rivera-Avni, IAPG.

EUROPE

Resource Mobilisation for RH a Priority

The group meeting from the Inter-Europe region set themselves a broad range of objectives for their short term action over the next three (3) years that encompassed many spheres of the political arena. These objectives included holding of hearings on SRHR, trafficking, gender based violence and securing RH commodities including condoms; and the provision of training and information that is clear and concise. An increase in funding for Family Planning was also set as an objective. They also recognized that it is vital to participate so that any approach is uniform and bi-partisan.



Alaadin Morsy, Director,
DASECA, UNFPA

To that end, the regional plan of action for Inter-Europe focused on issues such as the migration of skilled workers, trafficking, GBV, prevention of STIs in Europe and the identification of issues around illegal migrant workers. Activities include the skilling-up of key participants through study



Above: Hon. Osbonbek Artykbaev and Hon. Kanibek Kapashovich, MP's, Kyrgyzstan; and below parliamentarians from Indonesia during the Regional group session

conferences; the strengthening of links with NGOs and civil society; and an increase of information and advocacy work done with the media. The benchmarks identified reflected their objectives and the actions that will be carried out to achieve those activities. Benchmarks included the creation of All Party Parliamentarian Groups in countries where there are none, the creation of specialised task forces within EPF, learning needs assessments, and both the acquisition and provision of information from all areas relating to SRHR. The European Regional Session was chaired by EPF President Ruth Genner, MP and Neil Datta, EPF Secretary acted as resource person.

59th Executive Committee Meeting of AFPPD

Parliamentarians Need More Information and Evidence



Mr Yasuo Fukuda, Chair of AFPPD, Mr Sultan Aziz, Director APD, UNFPA, H.E Ratu Kinijoji Maivalili, President of the Senate, Fiji and Mr Lakshman Singh, MP, India and Vice Chairperson AFPPD during the Executive committee meeting.

Bangkok - 23 November 2006, the 59th Executive Committee of Asian Forum met under the Chairmanship of Mr. Yasuo Fukuda and addressed by Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director, Asia-Pacific Division, UNFPA. Mr. Aziz mentioned that parliamentarians need authentic information, to be fully equipped to deal with population and development issues. The committee reviewed the IPCI/ICPD conference and expressed their appreciation towards the work

done by AFPPD, UNFPA and Thai Parliament staff, and the contribution of Parliamentarians. Ms Steve Chadwick, MP New Zealand and Chair of the Standing Committee on Women and Mr. Beksultan Tutkushev, MP Kazakhstan, presented reports on the Women's Conference, as well as and the Central Asia Conference on Adolescent Reproductive and Sexual health. The program for 2007 was also reviewed and approved.

Steering IPCI/ICPD 2009 towards Egypt

Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Secretary General, AFPPD, chaired the steering committee meeting of the International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action. The meeting which took place on Monday 20 November reviewed the final preparations of the conference.

Ms. Safiye agar, Director, IERD, UNFPA and Ms. Harumi Kodoma, Parliamentary/ NGO public affairs officer, IERD/UNFPA, discussed the agenda and the expected results of the conference. The steering committee also discussed the future venue of the next conference in 2009, a decision was reached by the end of the conference and with much deliberation the venue for the 2009 IPCI/ICPD was declared to be in Egypt. 15th Anniversary of ICPD of POA was adopted in Cairo in 1994.

"Learn how to work effectively with the media to ensure that our messages reach the widest audience possible."

Photo Gallery of IPCI/ICPD Participants



Mr. Prosper Poukouta, Mr. Keita Ohashi, and Ms. Fama Ba, Director, Africa Division, UNFPA, and H.E. Nassour Guelengdouksia Ouaidou, President, National Assembly, Chad



Mr. Kwabena Osei-Danquah, Chief, Executive Board, IERD, UNFPA, Dr. Osamu Kusumoto, APDA, Mary Henry, MP, Ireland, Yasuo Fukuda, MP, Japan, and Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit.



Parliamentarians from the United Kingdom and Turkey during Drafting Session



Parliamentarians from Chad and Chile



Parliamentarians from Iran



Parliamentarians from Russian Federation during Drafting Session



Parliamentarians from Lithuania and Liberia



Hon. Valeriy Doskalov, MP and Beksultan Tutkushev, Senator, Kazakhstan at the General Meeting

"Create partnerships with regional parliamentary groups and UNFPA to develop effective mechanisms to network with other parliamentarians to exchange experiences and accurate information, including model legislation and policies, share our successes, learn from our failures and monitor our work."

Bangkok Statement - IPCI/ICPD

Budget reforms to ensure that there is a Development assistance focus; and an increase in advocacy and public awareness campaigns that link Population and Reproductive Health issues to any development goals set by an individual country or region.

The Role of Parliamentarians in Implementing the ICPD Agenda and the MDGs

Limited Information

Chaired by Hon. Malcolm Washer, MP Australia and resourced by Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director, Asia and Pacific Division, UNFPA.



Mr. Sultan Aziz, Director, Asia and Pacific Division, UNFPA, delivered a unique presentation from which was the basis of their discussions on the role of parliamentarians in the implementation of the ICPD Agenda and the MDGs, the presentation "A Simple Guide for Travels in the ICPD Galaxy!" offered participants' evidence based information on Reproductive Health and the MDGs and how parliamentarians can work with these goals in more manageable and specific pieces in order to achieve them. He emphasized on the necessary services to reach the goal as he referenced the main topics discussed during the World Health Assembly in May 2004 which include promoting reproductive health, the obstetric care, use of contraception, the elimination of unsafe abortion, as well as controlling STI's with an emphasis on HIV/AIDS and reproductive system cancers. Moreover, as Reproductive Health is distinct in comparison to other health fields, not only services but also other dimensions, which include realizing the importance of culture, the involvement of all sectors of society and the concern of its complexity, need to be taken into account.

The group identified issues around the limitations within their roles as parliamentarians, those being difficulty

in Government accountability, not always having an avenue of free expression, limited political will and major issues around culture and religion with the implementation of any legislation or programme. Additionally, many Parliamentarians from war torn countries identified issues around large displaced and mobile populations and a limited legal framework to work within. Other issues focused on limited financial capacity of the legislature, limited and strained funding for basic services, limited knowledge of model laws, limited information on issues related to ICPD/MDGs, gender issues within a local and regional context.

The Population-Environment Nexus and the MDGs

Earth's Regenerative Capacity Surpassed

Chaired by Hon. Salwa Masri, MP Jordan and Resourced by Mr. Lester Brown, President, Earth Policy Institute, USA.

The presentation by Mr. Lester Brown, the president of Earth Policy Institute, USA, highlighted that population growth does not only offer each person a smaller share of the existing resources but also greatly contribute to the recent environmental damages. "Humanity's collective demands have surpassed the earth's regenerative capacity some 25 years ago," he said. Mr. Brown elaborated on several environmental concerns caused by such trends, being water scarcity, over fishing, deforestation, the increasing oil demand, and throwaway economy. Mr. Brown, then, further assessed several conflicts that have emerged: tensions increase as communities compete for natural resources; nations become engaged in international political conflicts over the allocation of water; and lastly, the increasing number of environmental refugees with the emphasis on water refugees as populations are outgrowing the water supply and sinking into hydrological



Mr. Lester Brown, President, Earth Policy Institute, USA. and Hon. Salwa Masri, MP Jordan in front and Ms. Kiyoko Ikegami, Director, Tokyo Office, IERD, UNFPA and Mr. Bill Musoke, Deputy Director, APD, UNFPA standing behind, prior to the thematic group discussion

poverty. From Mr. Brown's presentation the group discussed how these environmental concerns are hindering the efforts in reaching the MDGs and ICPD agenda, and come up with ways in which some of these issues could be addressed.

During this session Mr. Lester Brown also took the opportunity to introduce his new book "Plan B 2.0; Rescuing a Planet Under Stress and a Civilization in Trouble." The book looks at environmental sustainability and puts forward a plan (Plan B) to build a new economy and a new world. Mr. Brown proposes that Plan B has three components; a restructuring of the global economy so that it can sustain civilization; an all-out effort to eradicate poverty, stabilize population, and restore hope in order to elicit participation of the developing countries; and a systematic effort to restore natural systems. For a copy of this book please visit the Earth Policy Institute website: www.earthpolicy.org.



Parliamentarians during the thematic group discussion

"Ensure that national legislation takes into account the aspirations of young people and their sexual and reproductive health and rights, recognizing that they have a crucial role to play in decision-making and development processes."



National Strategies to Achieve Universal Access to Reproductive Health Intergrating Services Vs. Sector-wide Approach

Chaired by Hon. Philomene Fouty-Soungou, MP Congo and resourced by Mr. Stan Bernstein, Senior Policy Advisor, Technical Support Division (TSD), UNFPA



At present, successful models of national strategies to reproductive health do exist, however significant numbers of the public do not have access to it. The opening presentation of the discussion conducted by Mr. Stan Bernstein, the Senior Policy Advisor to Technical Support Division of the UNFPA, concentrated on what can be done to reach a larger proportion of the general public. He emphasised on the scaling up of national development strategies, which include expanding service delivery points and integrating services and components. "The national development plans have increasingly become and will become the action plan to achieve the MDGs", he said. To be successful, the right intervention is necessary. This involves being engaged in all stages of national planning as well as assessing needs and conducting situational evaluations. Mr. Bernstein stated that, as the targets and the range of necessary interventions are defined, only the needs are to be calculated and a

financing strategy is to be developed. He talked of the importance of a Sector Wide Approach in the success of the national development plan, and stressed on how progress must be closely monitored and evaluated, suggesting that marginalised groups can be used as signals of generalised access, and constituencies of community reporting and action can be created. To ensure that efforts are accountable, the reports made should align with the appropriate political and administrative units in the government.

Countering Opposition Against the ICPD Agenda Representatives Can Play a Major Role

Chaired by Hon. Maria Mirtala Lopez Meijia, MP El Salvador, and resourced by Mr. Jon O'Brien, Executive Vice-President, Catholics for Free Choice, USA



Some religions are a major obstacle against the implementation of the ICPD agenda in many parts of the world and the presentation given by Mr. Jon O'Brien, Executive Vice-President, Catholics for Free Choice, emphasised this point as well as engaged the participants in a discussion on advocating for reproductive rights of women and better reproductive health. Mr. O'Brien used his experience with difficulties surrounding prochoice abortion, to articulate the importance of evidence

saying that data and educational materials are important tools for law makers when it comes to making informed public policy decisions and to articulate ethically sound prochoice positions that support all aspects of reproductive choice and policies that support women, families and children. The group went on discuss ways in which parliamentarians can actively advocate against these oppositions in their respective countries as they can play a major role in countering the opposition's propaganda.

In summary, looking at the identified actions, we can see that these areas are inextricably linked. To achieve significant and meaningful funding levels to implement the ICPD programme of action and MDGs, parliamentarians are required to ensure that legislation is enacted to facilitate the development of networks, tools and mechanisms so that funding can be earmarked for this work.

International Parliamentarians Welcomed by Thai Parliament



Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit introducing Mr Meechai Ruchuphan to Ms. Thoraya Obaid.

The President of the National Legislative Assembly, Meechai Ruchuphan, as the host, welcomed the participants of the 2006 International Parliamentarians' Conference to Bangkok at a grand reception at the Shangri-La Hotel. Mr. Ruchuphan stated that Thailand had long been committed to population programming, sustainable development, HIV/AIDS prevention, the alleviation of poverty, the status of women and the provision of adequate reproductive health services.

MPs Welcomed by Thai Health Minister



The Minister of Public health, Thailand, Dr. Mongkol Na Songkhla, hosted a welcome lunch in honour of the parliamentarians attending the IPCI/ICPD and stated that Thailand is strongly committed to the goals of the ICPD and is making progress towards them. Mr. Fukuda thanked the Minister for his generosity and the Thai government for its strong support for the work of AFPPD. Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit also thanked the Minister for his warm welcome.

"Urge governments and the private sector to give priority to and increase resources for continued research and development of new disease prevention technologies, such as vaccines and microbicides, as well as promoting access to the newly developed HPV vaccine that potentially protects against cancer of the cervix."

Asia Pacific Alliance (APA) and AFPPD - Parliamentarian/NGO Dialogue on HIV/AIDS and RH: Parliamentarians are The Key to Change

The Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Ms. Thoraya Obaid appealed for greater efforts to be made to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS during the dialogue session between the parliamentarians and NGOs of the Asia and Pacific region.

The participants of the dialogue, organised by the Asia Pacific Alliance for the Implementation of ICPD in collaboration with AFPPD, were welcomed by Ms. Steve Chadwick, MP (New Zealand). Ms. Chadwick emphasised the need for close cooperation between NGOs and parliamentarians, stating that NGOs can provide a platform for parliamentarians to spread their messages related to reproductive health, HIV/AIDS and the status of women.

Services Need to be Improved

Ms. Thoraya Obaid continued the dialogue underlining that the priority issues in sexual and reproductive health are clear and women and children bear the brunt of this problem and it is essential to that services be extended and improved, whilst stressing that "With no cure in sight for AIDS, our first line of defense must remain HIV prevention." That means pushing for increased and improved reproductive health services throughout the region – this is a basic health and human right she added. "Together we must work to increase public health budgets, development plans, poverty reduction strategies and health sector reforms," she told the dialogue participants. This will not only save money but will save lives.

NGO's Have Knowledge of the Problem

Face-to-face dialogue is crucial for affecting real change, the Director General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, Dr. Gill Greer told the NGOs and MPs at the APA dialogue. The NGOs have first hand knowledge of the problem and experience of providing services to the affected, while the parliamentarians are



Above: Ms. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director UNFPA; Ms. Steve Chadwick, MP, New Zealand and Dr. Gill Greer, Director General IPPF opening the NGO / Parliamentarian Dialogue. Below: Parliamentarians from Asia and the Pacific with members from Regional NGOs discussing the linkages between HIV and Reproductive health.

government. Working together these two groups can educate the community, change public perceptions and initiate real policy change, she said. NGOs have an important advocacy role in promoting better reproductive health services and preventing the spread of HIV. "They have a vision of a healthier and better community that could lead to a healthier and better world," she said. "We can only have influence though if some one is listening; and, they have the power to implement change," Dr. Greer warned.

NGO's and Parliamentarians

Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Secretary General of AFPPD, followed by explaining her own experiences of working with NGOs in Thailand, and asked the NGO representatives present to work closely with their elected representatives to achieve the goals of their organisations. The

parliamentary - NGO dialogue heard presentations from NGOs in Cambodia, Cook Islands, Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Philippines and Thailand on work being done in the areas of the prevention of mother and child transmissions, services for pregnant women, adolescent reproductive health and the prevention of HIV/AIDS.

The dialogue focused on peer group education for young people, and ensuring it was properly resourced, and the provision of voluntary counselling and testing in its final discussions. Stigma and discrimination needed to be addressed where it was occurring. The participants also suggested that legislation needed to be reviewed in connection with sex workers and the criminalisation of drug users.

"Action to manage and prevent STIs in order to increase wellbeing, and prevent infertility, cervical cancer, maternal and newborn complications and deaths, and vulnerability to HIV/AIDS."

Establishing Future Directions for Effective Partnerships

UNFPA Division of Arab States, Europe and Central Asia (DASECA) organised a partners meeting in Amman (Jordan) 3-5 November 2006. The meeting was attended by NGOs working with UNFPA and the three regional parliamentary organisations (African and Arab Forum, European Forum and Asian Forum) which cover Central Asia. Mr. Alaadin Morsy, Director of DASECA, UNFPA opened the meeting and spoke of the importance of partnerships with NGO's and civil society organisations, whilst Ms. Samira Atallah, Regional Programme Coordinator, DASECA, UNFPA, provided the background and purpose of the meeting.

The participants were given an overview of the UNFPA Country and Inter-country Programmes by Ms. Doina Bologa, UNFPA Deputy Regional Representative, Uzbekistan; Ms. Lidia Bardakova, UNFPA Assistant, Representative, Russia; Ms. Lina Mousa, UNFPA Representative, Syria; Mr. Peeter Sieben, UNFPA Representative, Romania and Ms. Samira Atallah, with Mr. Abdel Muniem Abu Nuwar, Director Country Support Team, Amman, UNFPA discussed the technical assistance programme.

The programme for the first day then discussed such issues as HIV/AIDS prevention, population and development strategies and reproductive health. The insight into the HIV/AIDS prevention programme was provided by Mr. Aleksander Bodiroza,

HIV/AIDS and Youth Programme Specialist, DASECA, UNFPA and Ms. Mila Paunic, Head of Department for Preventative Medicine and Centre for HIV & STI Prevention, Serbia. Population and development



Ms. Samira Atallah, Regional Programme Coordinator, DASECA, UNFPA, at the meeting

Strategies were discussed by Mr. Ahmed Abdel Monem, Director, Pan Arab Project for Family Health, League of Arab States; Mr. Andres Vikat, Chief of Population Activities Unit, UNECE; Ms. Batool Shakoori Team Leader of Population Development Team, UNESCWA and Mr. Madibo, Project Coordinator, Arab Urban Development Institute. The Issues around Reproductive health were discussed by Dr. Ahmed Ragab, International Islamic Center for Population Studies and Research (IICPSR), Al-Azhar University; Ms. Katy Shcroff, RH Advisor, CST Bratislava, UNFPA and Mr. Tony

Hudgins, RHCS Regional Project Coordinator, DASECA, UNFPA.

The second day of the meeting discussed the Youth programming and policy, along with parliamentary affairs and gender. Mr. Aleksander Bodiroza; Mr. Khaled Louhichi, Director, Population, Policy, and Migration Department, League of Arab States; Ms. Tonya Nyagiroti, Director, Youth NET, Family Health International; Mr. Dragan Ilic, Student Polyclinic Serbia; Mr. Koray, Youth Peer Education Network International Coordinator, EECA and Ms. Nour Al-Rashid, Youth Peer Education Network International Coordinator, Arab States. The group was presented with information and discussed parliamentary affairs with Ms. Khira Lagna, President, FAAPPD; Mr. Neil Datta, Executive Director, EPF and Mr. Shiv Khare, Executive Director, AFPPD. The Gender issues were presented and discussed by Ms. Atidel Majebrri and Mr. Imed Zouri, Centre for Arab Women's Training and Research, Tunis; Ms. Faiza Benhadid, Gender and Culture CST Advisor, Amman, UNFPA and Ms. Samira Atallah, DASECA.

The most important part of the meeting was to discuss lessons learnt and future directions towards effective partnership and useful and practical suggestions were made in the meeting. The effort of DASECA was appreciated by NGOs and other partners.

European MPs Study Visit of Viet Nam and Thailand.

On 23-24 November 2006, EPF organized field visits to Thailand and Viet Nam for fourteen European Parliamentarians, EPF was assisted by the host organizations Planned Parenthood Association of Thailand (PPAT) and the UNFPA Vietnam country office.

The Bangkok field visit included stops at Planned Parenthood of Thailand, for a presentation on sexual and reproductive health and rights in Thailand; two youth programmes designed to raise awareness of gender equality, HIV/AIDS prevention, and reproductive health issues; the Rainbow Sky Association of Thailand, to learn about gender diversity issues and HIV/AIDS prevention outreach; and the Population and Community Development Association, at one of its subsidiary projects, the Condoms and Cabbages restaurant.

Seven European parliamentarians from donor countries participated in a second field visit to Viet Nam which included an introduction to Viet Nam's youth-friendly health services, set up over the past three years with support from the European Union (EU) and the United Nations



European Parliamentarians group during Bangkok study visit

Population Fund (UNFPA) totaling US\$2.4 million. The centre visited is like 21 others around the seven provinces in Viet Nam, created as part of a regional joint EU-UNFPA initiative to improve the sexual and reproductive health of young people in seven Asian countries, under the RHIYA programme. "Europe can learn from Viet Nam in providing sexual and reproductive health information and services for young people", Senator Mary Henry, Irish member of parliament said during a 2-day study tour to the port city of Hai Phong.

Asian Forums 25 years Celebrated



“The Asian Forum has made significant contributions in the development of the Asian and Global Parliamentary movement”

Having the 25th anniversary celebration for AFPPD during the 2006 ICPD/IPCI conference is a fitting time to remember and celebrate past achievements. Since the establishment of AFPPD in 1981, eight General Conferences/Assemblies of the Forum have taken place. AFPPD also organised many workshops and seminars of parliamentarians and has played a pivotal role in organising many international conferences including the International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (ICPPD), just prior to the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994 at Cairo, Egypt.

A dinner reception was held on the night of the 21 November at the UN conference Centre to celebrate 25 years of AFPPD. During the reception Mr. Yasuo Fukuda, Chairman of AFPPD, remembered the contribution of Japanese Parliamentarians specifically Mr. Sato, Mr. Sakurai, Mr. Yatsu and several others in the formation and development of AFPPD. He said that AFPPD has been quite effective in not only mobilising

parliamentarians but through them proposing and enacting legislation, also at the resource mobilisation front. He mentioned the achievements of AFPPD before launching the AFPPD commemorative book, “The Population Challenge in Asia: Parliamentarians as Advocates and Policymakers”, written by Mr. Jyoti Shanker Singh, former UNFPA Deputy Executive Director, and presenting it to Mrs. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA. “The Asian Forum has made significant contributions in the development of the Asian and Global Parliamentary movement,” said Ms. Thoraya Obaid on receiving the commemorative book. Dr. Gill Greer, Director of IPPF, narrated the work done by AFPPD in its 25 years and recalling programs involving parliamentarians of the Asia and Pacific region which according to her are being followed the world over.

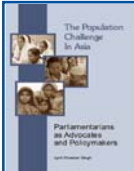
AFPPD, through its role with the ICPD, has provided an opportunity for parliamentarians from other regions to form their own regional groupings to provide support to and follow-up on the implementation of the ICPD

Programme of Action. Two other regional groupings of parliamentarians have since formed. They are the Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAAPPD), and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF). Over this period, National Committees of Parliamentarians on Population and Development have also been established in a number of countries. In looking back over the successes and failures of the last 25 years, we must always remember to continue to work in partnership, towards a better future.

Prof. Dr. Prasop's Contribution



The celebrations of the 25th year of AFPPD continued onto a luncheon the following day, in which the Honorary Founding member of AFPPD Prof. Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn addressed the participants of the IPCI/ICPD conference with his heartfelt memories of AFFPD, and its founders. His speech was full of good wishes and for happy and prosperous lives, as well as quoting an old Thai Ballad emphasizing that parliamentarians should always, “Be good, Be right and Be Just.”



The Population Challenge in Asia: Parliamentarians as Advocates and Policymakers, by Jyoti Singh is a short history of AFPPD from its inception to today, taking into account the people who formed the organisation and the progress that have been made over the past 25 years, through the conferences, workshops and study tours that have been organised for the Parliamentarians of the Region.

- For a copy of the book please contact AFPPD.

New Partnerships with Parliamentarians



UNFPA representatives during the Strategy meeting; Ragga Said, Public Affairs Associate, IERD; Harumi Kodama, Parliamentary/ NGO Public Affairs Officer, IERD; Safiye Cagar, Director IERD; Mari Simonen, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA and Hedi Jemai, Director, Brussels Office, IERD.

The Annual Strategy Meeting on Partnership with Parliamentarians convened by UNFPA on 19 November in Bangkok agreed that their work had a positive effect on government policy in many countries of the world; although, they concluded that greater efforts still needed to be taken to strengthen reproductive health services and the prevention of HIV/AIDS globally. This was a view that was also reinforced by the Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Ms. Mari Simonen, who addressed the strategy

meeting, as this is where parliamentarians' strong support was needed. The meeting was attended by representatives of the Regional Parliamentarian Groups and UNFPA representatives from their regional divisions. These organisations and the UNFPA also reported on work over the last twelve months and outlined their priorities and work plans for the coming year. The meeting concluded with discussion on ways to forge and strengthen new partnerships with various parliamentary groups.

AFPPD Events in 2007

Asian Parliamentarians' Workshop on HIV/AIDS. January 24-25, Bangkok, Thailand, organised by AFPPD with UNFPA.

Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development. February 22-23, Tokyo, Japan, organised by APDA and AFPPD.

5th Asian Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference, Beijing, China (tbc)

Central Asian Parliamentarians' Workshop, Almaty, Kazakhstan (tbc)

Afro-Asian Parliamentarians' Conference, Tokyo, Japan.

IFAD-AFPPD Parliamentarians' Workshop on Small Islands.

Regional Capacity Development Training Workshop for Parliament staff, Chiang Mai, Thailand

Those Who Contributed to the IPCI-Bangkok Success



The success of IPCI goes to all who participated in the event, including representatives of UNFPA, officials of C.O. IERD New York, and officers of Regional Parliamentarian groups. AFPPD's staff, as the organizers of the event, and the staff of the National Assembly of Thailand have worked tirelessly to ensure the contentment of all participants by providing fine services in coordinating and logistics.

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