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FORUM NEWSLETTER

Publication of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

World Parliamentarians ask Reproductive Health to be the 9th MDG

IPCI-ICPD + 10, Strasbourg, October 17-19, 2005

150 parliamentarians from all over the world assemble at the Council of Europe, Strasbourg 17 -19 October 2005 to review Ten Years of ICPD. The International Conference of Parliamentarians on ICPD was organised by the Inter-European Forum of Parliament on population and development (IEFPPD) and the UNFPA in cooperation with AFPPD, IAPG and FAAPPD. Early on the first day parliamentarians were welcomed at a reception of the French National Assembly Delegation on Women's Rights and Equal Opportunities between Men and Women on the 17th of October and hosted by Ms. Marie-Jo Zimmermann, MP.

Opening Remarks

Opening remarks were also made by H.E. the Rt Hon. Terry Davis, Secretary General, Council of Europe, H.E. Mr. Marcel Glesener, Vice-president, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and H.E. Mr. Xavier Darcos, Deputy Minister for International Development, France.

“Cairo Conference Turning Point in the Right Direction”

Dr. Thoraya Obaid



Dr. Thoraya Obaid

In a keynote speech Dr. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA said, ‘Cairo was a turning point in development thinking and it was a turn in the right direction. The Cairo Conference put the focus where it should be – on improving the quality of life for all people, no matter where they happen to be born and whether they are women or men. It put the focus on protecting human rights and the natural resources on which all life depends, and bringing our world into greater balance. It recognised that what happens in one part of the world affects what occurs in another, and migration, urbanisation, and poverty and sustainable development are interconnected.’

“People are Demanding Information and Services”

She went on to say, ‘all over the world, in every region, people are demanding information and services to prevent HIV/AIDS and unwanted pregnancy. In every country, increasing Today, as never before, young women are refusing to be victims of genital cutting and in more and more cases, their parents and communities are supporting them in this choice. And young people who live in this global information age are demanding that they be let out of the dark, when it comes to information and services, to protect their reproductive health and exercise their reproductive rights.

The ICPD Programme of Action’, she said ‘is a global programme based on universal, ethical principles that reinforce human dignity and encourage the fulfilment of human aspirations.’ She said, ‘the UNFPA, as the lead agency in implementing this agenda, is committed to these human rights and we are taking a culturally sensitive approach in the programme development and implementation. Such an approach does not impose solutions but engages the concerned communities in a process of dialogue to reach out to their own positive values and institutions and bring about the change that is necessary to implement the Programme of Action.’

“ICPD should be reflected in MDGs”

Dr. Thoraya Obaid concluded her speech with a warning saying that, ‘if greater action is not taken to fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action, we will not only miss the opportunity to achieve the ICPD goals, we will also fail to achieve the Millennium Development Goals. Together, we must ensure that the ICPD agenda is fully reflected in the Millennium Declaration review process. Ten years ago, the governments of the world made a promise to bring about reproductive health for all by the year 2015. Today, I call upon all leaders to live up to this commitment and to keep the promises they made in the great city of Cairo 10 years ago.’

“Better Reproductive Health Contributes to Development”

Dr. Safiye Cagar

Ms. Safiye Cagar, Director (UNFPA) , while welcoming parliamentarians, confirmed the principal of ICPD. She said, ‘the Cairo consensus underscores each nation’s sovereign right to decide development policy and practice for itself; but the global consensus is that reproductive health is a human right, part of the overall right to health: And every country accepts its obligation to ensure



Ms. Safiye Cagar, UNFPA



that national policy promotes human rights. So national sovereignty and human rights balance each other. In addition, the consensus holds that better reproductive health will in turn contribute to national development.’

She added that, ‘ the 1994 consensus addressed the heart of the controversy over population – the relationship among national sovereignty and decision-making, human rights and development needs – and settled it to almost universal satisfaction. I have to say almost, because there is still a small group of extremists who do not fully accept the consensus. Some of them want to pretend that reproductive health is really about abortion. Of course, as you know from your own experience the Cairo consensus does not promote abortion. In fact, every step we take towards better reproductive health helps to reduce the risk of unsafe abortion and its terrible toll on women’s lives and health.

The Cairo consensus respects all points of view. It is important that the discussion should take place, in all countries and in all cultural contexts. The Cairo consensus has a very solid ethical foundation, based on universal principles. It is flexible enough –it is intended – to accommodate the whole spectrum of beliefs and convictions.

“Political Will Needed to Implement ICPD”

She went on to say that, ‘while countries have made progress and they have proven that they own the ICPD, there is still great need for the political will that will create the enabling environment to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. We all know that we must have laws, policies and actions that will make reproductive health services available to all by 2015. That is absolutely fundamental, that comes first. It isn’t just money that is still needed. But resources are still a significant problem. In the face of these challenges, it must be said, most countries have not made the resources available to implement Cairo in full, and to the time-scale called for in the Programme of Action.

“Investing in Reproductive Health Essential for Economic Development”

Dr. Steven Sinding

Dr. Steven Sinding, Director General, IPPF declared that families – women in particular – will only escape poverty when they can exercise control over the number and spacing of their children and can protect themselves against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.’

Also on the one hand, where the US Government has directly challenged the Cairo Consensus, as at Bangkok and San Juan, they have been isolated and defeated - even to the extent that countries which had originally entered reservations on their support for the Programme of Action have dropped those reservations. On the other hand, we have seen numerous instances in which the US has used its massive economic leverage to try and coerce countries to support its efforts to roll back the Cairo Consensus. This has had a chilling effect which, at its most benign, has still made reproductive and sexual health a controversial subject and therefore for some governments more comfortable to ignore than to engage. A small but well funded ideologically-based opposition movement is growing in parts of the world and Parliamentarians would be well advised not to underestimate either the power or the determination of these forces. At the same time, we must not allow ourselves to be put on the defensive. We must move to become an ever more proactive and positive coalition for reproductive and sexual rights.’

He added that, ‘investing in reproductive health care is essential for economic development, for saving lives, and for making lives worth living. Sexual and reproductive health problems affect people in the prime of life. Improvements in health care would have so many benefits, including a healthier and more productive workforce. On the other side of the equation, better sexual and reproductive health would reduce public expenditure on maternal health problems, family subsidies and orphan care.’

Concerning the rise of a political opposition Dr. Sinding said that ‘the second major challenge is the efforts of religious conservatives, including the Vatican and a handful of its allies such as the current US Administration, to ‘sabotage’ the Cairo Conference Programme of Action. The continuing hostility of the Bush Administration to sexual and reproductive health and rights is having a curious impact around the world of its allies such as the current US Administration, to ‘sabotage’ the Cairo Conference Programme of Action.

10 Years After Cairo “Successes and Constraints”

Dr. Imelda Henkins

Ms. Imelda Henkins, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA moderated the session ‘10 years after Cairo’ and said that ‘much progress has been made but many countries need assistance in Reproductive Health, HIV & AIDS, Gender Equality and other issues. She said that much progress has been made but large number of countries need assistance in reproductive Health, HIV/AIDS, Gender Equality and Sexual Issues. Each nation has its own needs and UNFPA can only respond to them if they have proper resources. You as parliamentarians can help UNFPA to receive these resources. You can work with your governments to achieve the pledges made in Cairo, The Hague and other forums.’



Dr. Steven Sinding, UNFPA



Dr. Imelda Henkins, UNFPA



H.E. Dr. Nilcea Freire, Minister for Women's Affairs, Brazil, H.E. Dr. Mohamed Awad Tag El Dine, Minister for Health and Population, Egypt, H.E. Ms. Charity K. Ngilu, Minister for Health, Kenya, H.E. Ms. Agnes van Ardenne, Minister for Development Cooperation, The Netherlands, H.E. Mr. Gareth Thomas, Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development, UK, H.E. Ms Annika Soder, State Secretary for Development Co-operation, Sweden spoke on the gains of Cairo.

Ms Charity K. Ngilu said , 'in Kenya, access to reproductive health programmes is limited by the high cost of health care and falling international development assistance towards health programmes.'

Progress in Resource Mobilisation and Creating an Enabling Environment

This important panel discussion was moderated by Dr. Nina Puri, President, IPFF. Panellists included Ms. Elizabeth Lule, Advisor for Population and Reproductive Health, Nutrition and Population, Human Development Network, World Bank, Dr. Lieve Fransen, Head of the Human and Social Development Unit, Directorate-General for Development, the European Commission, Mr. Lester Brown, President, Earth Policy Institute, Mr Tony Worthington, MP, UK, Dr. Reed Boland, Harvard University School of Public Health, Ms. Christine McCafferty, MP, UK., Member, Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe.

The parliamentarians took part in group discussions that covered the following topics:

Group Discussion

HIV/AIDS

Dr. Carol Jacobs, Director, National HIV/AIDS Commission, Barbados led the discussions on HIV/AIDS.

Reproductive Health Commodity Security

Mr. Jagdish Upadhyay, Coordinator, Commodity Management Unit, Technical Support Division, UNFPA spoke on reproductive health commodity security.

Millennium Development Goals, Population and Reproductive Health

Mr. Stan Bernstein, Senior Sexual and Reproductive Health Policy Advisor, Millennium Project, UN Development Group discussed the correlation between millenium development goals, population and reproductive health

Adolescent Reproductive Health

Dr. Dina Krauskopf, Professor Emeritus, University of Costa Rica spoke on adolescent reproductive health.

Reproductive Health in Emergency Situations

Ms. Pamela Delargy, Chief, Humanitarian Response Unit, UNFPA discussed reproductive health issues in emergency situations.

Food, Water, Population and Environment

Mr. Lester Brown, President, Earth Policy Institute, spoke on Food and Water and its relation to Population and Environment

Gender and Women's Empowerment

Ms. Fama Hane Ba, Director of Africa Division of UNFPA outlined country-based programmes on Gender and Women's Empowerment. She said in Uganda, starting in 1995, members of the Sabinu Elder's Association and clan leaders in the Kapchorwa district were sensitised on the harmful effects of the female genital cutting (FGC) by the Reproductive, Educative and Community Health Programme



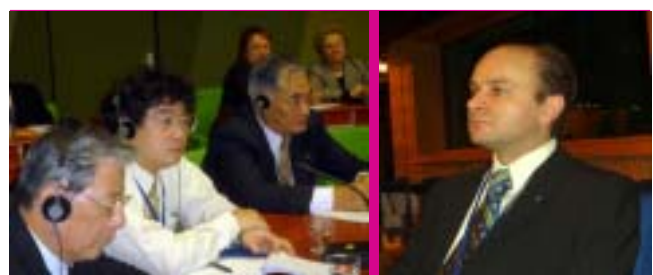
Ms. Fama Hane Ba, Director of Africa Division, UNFPA (3rd Left) discusses Gender and Women's Empowerment during a Group Discussion

(REACH). The programme offers information, education and communication activities that address policy makers, health professionals, parents and adolescents. Sabinu Elders themselves proposed replacing FGC with symbolic gift giving and other festivities. They also told members of their community of the harmful effects of FGC. Between 1994 and 1996, FGC declined by 36 per cent. In Zimbabwe, UNFPA supported a micro-credit finance scheme including training in business planning, and leadership courses on HIV/AIDS, gender and domestic violence, empowered women to speak out and gain community support for HIV prevention.

Maternal Mortality and Morbidity

Dr. Christiane Wellfens-Ekra, President, Society for African Gynaecologists and Obstetricians (SAGO) - discussed Maternal Mortality and Morbidity.

Draft Statement



L. to R.: Mr. Michio Ozako, Mr. Osamu Kusumoto, Mr. Yoshio Yatsu and Mr. Niel Datta

A draft statement was adopted at the end of the conference. There was also a discussion on follow-up by Ms. Safiye Cagar, Director, Information, Executive Board and Resource Mobilisation Division, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mr. Neil Datta, Secretary, Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPPFD) talking about followup activities to be undertaken by regional parliamentary groups in cooperation with UNFPA.



Brochure Launch: R.H. Commodity Security

A brochure was launched to inform parliamentarians about the importance and need for contraceptives and other supplies. Speakers included, Ms Agnes van Ardenne, Minister for Development Cooperation, Netherlands, H.E. Ms. Charity K Ngilu, Minister for Health, Kenya, Ms. Thoraya A. Obaid, Executive Director, UNFPA, Dr. Steven W. Sinding, Director-General, IPPF. Ms Agnes van Ardenne said 'For many, women pregnancy in developing countries is still a death sentence.'

Strasbourg Photo Gallery



Mr. Lester Brown, Earth Policy Institute



L. to R: Ms. Ruth Glessner, Ms. Terry Davis, Mr. Marcel Glessener and Mr. Niel Datta (standing)



Mr. Tony Worthington, MP UK



Ms. Nina Puri, President of IPPF



Mr. Stan Bernstein, UN Development Group



Minister for Development Cooperation, The Netherlands



Dr. Lieve Franssen, European Commission



L. to R: Tony Worthington, MP UK and Ms. Elizabeth Lule, World Bank



Ms. Marie-Jo Zimmermann, MP, President of Delegation



L. to R.: Minister for Health, Kenya and Minister for Health and Population Egypt



Ms. Ruth Glessner, President IEPFPD



Carina Hagg, IEPFPD Vice-President



Mr. Jagdish Upadhaya, UNFPA



Ms. Christine McCafferty, MP UK, Council of Europe



L. to R: Dr. Ms. Gill Greer, NZ Family Planning Association and Ms. Steve Chadwick, MP New Zealand

Parliamentarians and NGO's Discuss HIV/AIDS among Young People at Regional Consultative Workshop in Bangkok



Ms. Firoza Burhanudeen - Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit - Mr. G. Giridhar - Mr. Gopa Nair

From 22nd-24th September 2004, AFPPD organised the Regional Consultative Workshop for Parliamentarians on Advocacy for HIV/AIDS Prevention among Young People in Asia and the Pacific, in cooperation with the UNFPA and the IPPF. The workshop was specifically orientated towards understanding the impact of HIV/AIDS and the necessary advocacy for HIV/AIDS among young people and examine the package perceived under UNFPA-IPPF-AFPPD Joint Project

62 Participants from 8 countries attended the workshop, including 23 members of parliament from the region. Other participants included IPPF, ESEAOR, AIDCOM, ICYO, UNFPA, and UNFPA/CST.

The UNFPA Regional Project, the Advocacy Intervention Package, was a key focus of the workshop with the aim of informing participants about the experiences and lessons learned by AIDCOM and IPPF under the AIP. The advocacy issues raised for advancing HIV/AIDS prevention amongst young people were identified and a Plan of Action was created and given full commitment.

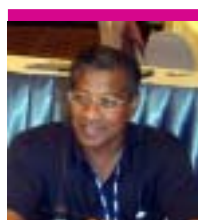
The opening ceremony was addressed by Mr. G. Giridhar, Director of UNFPA/CST, Senator Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Secretary General, AFPPD, Mr. Gopa Nair, Programme Manager for IPPF and Ms. Firoza Burhanudeen, Deputy Executive Director, AIDCOM.



L. to R: Mr. Peter Chen & Ms. Maria Imelda Marcos, MP Philippines

Following the introduction of the workshop objectives, by Ms. Pia Laine of UNFPA/CST, the participants were addressed by Mr.

Peter Chen, UNFPA/CST on the topic of 'Young People and HIV/AIDS in the global commitment and the role of the UNFPA'. Moving on to introduce the UNFPA Regional Project, Ms. Kumiko Yoshida, UNFPA/CST discussed the issue of advocacy and Ms. Firoza Burhanudeen provided a summary of the national needs assessment. Mr. Valentine Siva, on behalf of AIDCOM, gave a detailed review of the Advocacy Intervention Project findings and Mr. Gopa Nair headed a presentation detailing the findings from the 3 pilot countries, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea and Sri Lanka.



Mr. Valentine Siva

These 3 countries were selected for their dramatic variations in characteristics in terms of culture, religion and HIV/AIDS prevalence. Representatives from each country gave an overview of their findings and made recommendations for the future of the project and the issue of HIV/AIDS advocacy.



Mr. Pekan & Ms. Punpiputt

During a panel discussion the participants heard from Mr. Montri Pekan and Ms. Duanne Punpiputt of the PPAT on the topic of promoting RH and HIV prevention to youth

in Thailand. Mr. Pekan then gave examples of proactive provinces, Islamic communities, the roles of parents, mass media seminars and the help that the AFPPD provide in networking on an ongoing basis. Ms. Punpiputt discussed the work that the PPAT have done for

advocacy; raising support and awareness among high-level officers, including Members of Parliament, Religious Leaders, community leaders and parents. They also work with young people to provide them with information and enable them to protect themselves from HIV/AIDS and other STIs, and to enable them to disseminate the information they have learnt to their friends.



Mr. Sitapai & Ms. Setianingshi

Ms. S. Setianingshi and Mr. R. Sitapai, both young person advocates from Indonesia and PNG respectively, gave passionate presentations on the situation in their countries and the efforts that are being made for advocacy. They appealed



to parliamentarians for help and support in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

The second day began with informative presentations from Indonesia, PNG and Sri Lanka, with each country providing an overview of UNFPA's work on HIV/AIDS and collaboration with parliamentarians and then a presentation by parliamentarians on their activity. Speaking for Indonesia were Dr. Sam Samidjo, UNFPA and Dr. Ahmad Sanoesi



Dr. Sam Samidjo & Dr. Ahmad Sanoesi Tambunan

Tambunan, MP, whilst Ms. Malathi Weerasooriya, UNFPA Sri Lanka and Hon. Dr. Rohana Pushpakarna gave the break-down for the situation in Sri Lanka.

For PNG the participants heard from Lady Carol Kidu, MP, Dr. Bun Banare Zzerio, MP and Chairman of the HIV/AIDS Advocacy Committee, Mr. Isu Aluvula, HIV Response Coordinator for the NCD Provincial AIDS Steering



L. to R.: Parliamentarians from PNG; Lady Carol Kidu - Ms. Miriam Midire - Dr. Bun Banare Zzerio

Committee Secretariat and Ms. Miriam Midire, UNFPA PNG. The following session, Parliamentarians' Presentations on the Examples of Successful Policy

Change in HIV/AIDS and RH, included a passionate message from Mr. Jagannath Manda, MP India, who concluded his speech by saying "until we have an effective vaccine, prevention through awareness is the only antidote we have against HIV/AIDS. The first step to being aware is to be compassionate. Awareness demands the shedding of all types of prejudice and enabling the affected persons to live a normal life, free of stigma and full of joy that is as much their due as everybody's."



L. to R.: Mr. Jagannath Manda, MP India, Mr. Nguyen Hoang Mai, MP Vietnam, Dr. Ferjenal G. Biron, MP Philippines

Mr. Nguyen Hoang Mai of VAPPD explained Vietnam's situation and how the new policy formulated for HIV/AIDS treatment aims to treat 70% of AIDS patients with ARVs by 2010, with comprehensive care, more accessible ARVs and lower costs. Dr. Ferjenal G. Biron, Congressman for the Philippines rounded up the session by saying "they are working for an enabling policy environment in The Philippines where women no longer unnecessarily die by reason of pregnancy; where men are responsibly involved in family planning and where the young are able to practice their sexuality with responsibility."

The group work sessions resulted in the production of National Plans of Action for the 3 country project teams and a Regional Plan by the non-project country team. Discussions though out the workshop brought important issues into the open and overall it was felt that everyone benefited from the deliberations. Planning and RH, Indonesia; Mr. Huan Cheng Guan, MP Malaysia; Datin Rahmah Osman, Executive Director AFPPD Malaysia, Mr. Benny Allen, MP PNG and from the Philippines, Congresswoman Ms. Maria Imelda Marcos.

Other participants included Mr. Simon Patrice Morin, MP Indonesia; Mr. Mohammad Qodrat Iswara and Syafruddin Amir, MPs for West Java Province; Mr. Anwar, MP West Kalimantan, Ms. Ince Damaris Petronela Sayuna, NTT Provincial MP and Dr. Sumaryati Arjoso, Chairperson of BKKBN. Dr. Siswanto Agus Wilopo, Hon. Mr. Sudath Neraanjan Wickramasinghe, Minister of Health; Hon. Mr. Champaka S. Wijeratne, Minister of Health for Central Province; Hon. Mr. C. Piyasiri Agulugaha Gamage, Minister of Health, Southern Province; Hon. Mr. Prasanna Rantunga, Minister of Health, Western Province and Dr. A.T.P.L Abeykoon, Director of Population Division for the Ministry of Healthcare all attended for Sri Lanka.

Thailand also had strong representation in attendance, with participants including Dr. Virapong Skolkitivat, Senator and Chairperson of the Public Health Committee; General Meechai Nukulkit, also Senator and Member of the PHC; Ms. Maleerat Kaewka, Senator and Member of the Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs and Thai Women; Senator Ms. Tuenjai Deetes and Ms. Huwaidiyah Pitsuwan Useng, MP. For Vietnam, Mme. Tran Thi Thinh, MP and Mme. Huynh Thu Phuoc, MP attended.

The final day saw the adoption of the common Plan of Action and each participant returned to their countries with new motivation and a better understanding of the situation and activities involved in advocacy for HIV/AIDS prevention among young people.

Some of the quotable quotes from "Perspectives", an AFPPD publication on a cross section of parliamentarians from around the world and their views on ICPD related issues.

"Religion has great impact as certain faiths condemn family planning outright. Societal; customs and traditions are influential in many countries and this can also pose difficulties for those trying to work for family planning in those regions"

Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, MP Japan

"As the proverb "all roads lead to Rome" says,. All problems accruing around the world in the 21st century can be linked to population growth.

Dr. Ui-Wha Chung, MP Korea

"Gender inequality is a weighty issue and can greatly impede the implementation of population and development programmes"

Sen. Virapong Skolkitivat, Senator, Thailand

"It is important to note that population increases have a different environmental and resource usage impact depending upon whether a country is rich or poor.

Mrs. Kelly Hoare MP Australia



Adolescent Reproductive Health an Emerging Issue in Central Asia

APDA – AFPPD Annual Meeting, Almaty, Kazakhstan 28th – 29th September 2004



Ms. Kayoko Shimizu (second left), Vice-President APDA speaks at APDA-AFPPD annual meeting

Almaty - Parliamentarians from Asia Pacific and Central Asian Countries assembled at Almaty Health Resort for the 20th Asian Population and Development. The Association of Japan (APDA) Annual Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development with the focus on 'challenges for ICPD + 10 Towards a New Decade of ICPD PoA'.

The meeting was opened by Mr. Nurtay Abykaev, Chairman of the Senate of the Parliament of Kazakhstan, who spoke on parliamentarian's efforts on Population and Development issues in the country. He also emphasised the need to balance population with environment, which is a major problem in the region. He was also concerned about adolescent reproductive health.

AFPDD chairman, Mr. Yoshio Yatsu could not attend but Ms. Takeyame read the speech on his behalf. He said 'given the limit to what the earth can support, it is impossible to eradicate poverty and protect the environment as long as the population continues to grow. There is a need once and for all to send a strong message to the international community to recognize that the population problem is at the base of all the other problems'.

In his address Mr. Kunio Waki, Deputy Executive of UNFPA, remembered the close cooperation of UNFPA and Japan. He said, 'the political and operational significances of the Millennium Summit in 2000 and the Millennium Declaration cannot be understated. The MDGS, and though they, sets nationally agreed goals and targets, remain very important to focus our efforts on specific results in each



Parliamentarians from New Zealand

country, and indeed on global priorities. More than ever before development cooperation is about emphasizing outputs rather than just inputs. The comprehensive review of the Millennium Declaration next year will add to our understanding of what needs to be done to reach our shared goals.' This review is expected to provide some signposts – including policy options and resource requirements - for achieving the MDGs.

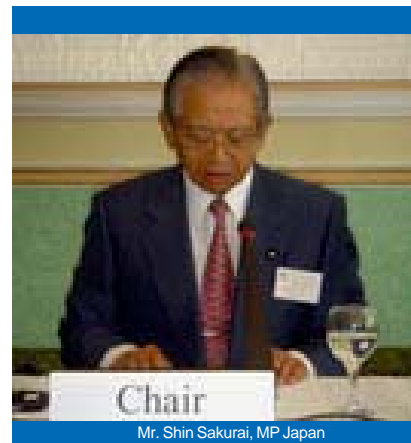
Mr Waki further dealt with Resources. He said that, 'the issue of results is closely related to that of resources. In UNFPA and for development cooperation as a whole, we are being held accountable for the resources we have and being (rightly) measured on the results we achieve. I believe this is also part of a wider issue of transparency and accountability, which we should all embrace, and is of course



L. to R.: Parliamentarians from India and Japan

a matter at the heart of parliamentarians and democracies'. He said that, 'the implications for us all is therefore to strive to keep reproductive health issues in the national policy dialogue and use these frameworks to 'mainstream' ICPD into national plans, strategies and expenditures. I believe we need to make stronger linkages – linkages between population and the broader social and economic context; between 'downstream' projects and 'upstream' programmes; between people and policies.

Mr. Shin Sakurai, MP (Japan) former Chairman of AFPPD and chair of its food security committee, spoke at length about the history of the parliamentarian's movement. He said that population still poses a grave problem for providing



Mr. Shin Sakurai, MP Japan

every family a decent living. Food security is an issue we all must look at with all seriousness and governments should be careful about international agreements under the WTO, which may give them a raw deal in food security areas.



Population Issues in Central Asia



Mr. Nesim Tumkaya

Mr. Nesim Tumkaya, UNFPA representative for Central Asia, discussed Population and Ageing. He spoke extensively on population change and development in Asia; major issues and policy issues in countries like Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan. It was noted that the average annual rate of population change from 2005 to 2025 is from 0 percent to 1.27 percent in six central Asian countries.

Mr. Tumkaya further noted that mortality increased in Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan and stayed constant in Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan. Infant and maternal mortality is especially high and a new and emerging threat in the region is HIV/AIDS.

He said that that all countries experienced negative net migration (emigration), that the highest migration occurred from Kazakhstan, which was the main reason for population decline in the recent past and that emigration was initially driven by political/ethnic reasons, but was now mostly economic.



Participants at the Central Asia Conference

It was also stated that central Asian countries are presently in the middle of a 'demographic window', with declining young age dependency, rising working age population, rising but still low old age dependency and the best development opportunity now. Mr Tumkaya observed that the ideal population size is the number that can facilitate sustainable development (it does not have to be a large population) and that there is nothing wrong with zero or negative population growth. Governments, it was stated, should take advantage of the present 'demographic window' to accelerate development and that if population growth is desired, it can be achieved by lowering mortality and encouraging immigration. Mortality, including maternal mortality, is still high and should be lowered further; governments should remove restrictions on rural-urban migration to improve labour efficiency. Population and Public Health, including the review of Alma Ata Declaration, was presented by Mr. Sokoko Yevgeniy Lvovich, Senior Researcher of Russian Academy of Sciences.

Ms. Safiye Cagar, Director of IERD, UNFPA, presented '10 years of ICPD – Achievements and Challenges.

Round Table discussion for ICPI international Parliamentarians Conference at Strasbourg discussed the 'Role of Parliamentarians in sustainability, environment, population and our future'.

Ms. Kayoko Shimizu, Vice-Chairman, APDA, in her closing address emphasised the need for a sustainable future for all which should include a balanced population suitable to provide a living for all and a sustainable environment. She hoped that governments and parliamentarians could continue to work for a world where all families can live a decent life within a sustainable environment and that may require a smaller population.

The 54th Executive Committee Meeting of AFPPD

The 54th Executive Committee Meeting of AFPPD met in Almaty under the chairmanship of Mr. Beksultan Tutkshiev and the Vice-Chairman of the AFPPD, in the absence of Mr. Yoshio Yatsu, Chairman of the AFPPD.

The Executive Committee reviewed the work of UNFPA and discussed future programmes. It also approved allocation of the Japan Trust Fund and AFPPD projects and programmes for 2005.



L. to R.: Ms. Kayoko Shimizu, Dr. Raj Karim, Sen. Tutkushev Beksultan

It was mentioned that 2004 was the year of elections in the Asia Pacific region and many parliaments have newly elected members of parliament. It was also noted that in India and the Philippines population activist parliamentarians got elected and in India some of them are now ministers.

It was also pointed out that the AFPPD would continue to experiment innovative methodology to involve parliamentarians. In the past AFPPD introduced programmes such as person-to-person advocacy to introduce population related issues to the majority of the members in the parliament. It also published interviews of parliamentarians and now it is introducing ' Focus Groups' to identify new members who may be future population activists.

It was noted that 2004, being the year for ICPPD at 10 , AFPPD collaborated with IPPF and others in observing the gains of ICPPD. AFPPD activities were also focused on ICPPD at 10. AFPPD also worked closely with UNFPA and Inter-European Forum for the International Parliamentarians Conference at Strasbourg.



Almaty Photo Gallery, Kazakhstan 28th – 29th September 2004



L. to R: Parliamentarians from Cambodia and Fiji



L. to R.: Dr. Safiye Cagar, Ms. Kayoko Shimizu, Dr. Raj Karim, Sen. Tutkushev Beksultan



L. to R.: Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit



L. to R: Parliamentarians from Kazakhstan



Parliamentarians from India



L. to R: Dr. Safiye Cagar, Mr. Nesim Tumkaya and Ms. Gaini Kumar



L. to R.: Sri Lanka and Vietnam



L. to R: Parliamentarians from Malaysia and Korea



Parliamentarians from Korea



L. to R.: Parliamentarians from Vietnam and Thailand



Philippine Parliamentarians Draw Up Plan for New Congress - Several Bills & Advocacy Efforts on the Plan -

Philippine Parliamentarians are bringing Population and RH to the main stream

Contrary to what some high-level officials of the government think, population and reproductive health (Pop-RH) issues are a national priority for the Philippines. This can be surmised from the strong public support for smaller family size and the raging debate on encouraging a two-child policy, a proposal contained in House Bill No. 16 or the Reproductive Health Care Act filed by Representative Edcel Lagman.

The Lagman bill gained prominence following a press conference called by PLCPD legislators on the President's omission of Pop-RH among her government's list of priority issues for the current Congress.

A section providing preferential rights in granting college scholarships to beneficiaries from families with only two children has since been emphasized in the media, giving birth to the "two-child policy" tag on HB 16. The issue, however, served to draw attention to what commentators term as the "population crisis" besetting the country.

Recently, Senator Panfilo Lacson filed Senate Bill 1546, a counterpart of HB 16. This bill provides automatic enrolment to the Philippine Health Insurance System (Phil Health) as an additional incentive. Other Pop-RH bills filed in the Lower House include HB 2029 (*Reproductive Health Care Act*) and HB 1808 (*Integrated Population and Development Act of 2004*). Each has a counterpart in SB 1280 and SB 1281, respectively, courtesy of Senator Rodolfo Biazon.

Another less publicized Pop-RH bill is SB 62 or the *Family Welfare Act* filed in the Senate by Senator Luisa Ejercito-Estrada. It seeks to establish a national welfare program and create a National Family Welfare Commission that will provide vital reproductive health care services for families.

Much, much more than a "Two- Child Policy" Bill

The so-called "two-child policy" bill actually seeks more than encouraging, on a *voluntary basis*, a two-child norm for Filipino families. It also seeks the establishment of an inter-agency Reproductive Health and Population Management Council (RHPMC) that will formulate a national policy and implement a national program on reproductive health, population and human development.

The Health Secretary and Director General of the National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) will act as co-chairpersons of the Council.

provision of Mobile Health Care Services (MHCS) for all congressional districts; mandatory Reproductive Health and Sexuality Education to Grade 5 up to Fourth Year High School students using a common curriculum for private and public schools; re-training on reproductive health care services delivery of Barangay Health Workers; tax incentives for manufacturers and importers of reproductive health commodities; employers' responsibilities like non-discrimination against women and inclusion of free health care services in Collective Bargaining Agreements (CBAs); private practitioners' assistance to indigent patients; multi-media campaign for raising public awareness on reproductive health care and rights relative to human development and population management; and tax-deductible donations to the Reproductive Health Program.

The Council will also include representatives from local government units and non-government organizations; LGU participation through the allotment of 50% out of the 20% Internal Revenue Allotment (IRA) for reproductive health care;

"Reproductive Health Care Act" Revival

There were bills on Reproductive Health Care popularly known during the last Congress as HB 4110 and SB 2325 and re-filed in the current Congress by principals Rep. Josefina Josen and Sen. Biazon, respectively.

Co-authors of this include Reps. Loretta Ann Rosales, Liza Maza, Lorna Silverio, JR Nereus Acosta, Gilbert Remulla, Emilio Macias, Solomon Chungalao, Darlene Antonino-Custodio and Arthur Pingoy.

These measures seek to improve the health and well being of Filipinos by establishing a comprehensive reproductive health program that recognizes women's rights, promotes gender equality and assures universal access to reproductive health information, education and services. The program includes the promotion and services for safe motherhood, care for those with HIV/AIDS and other sexually-transmitted diseases, infertility treatments, family planning information, services and provisions, encouragement of male involvement in reproductive health, prevention of abortion and management of its complications, adolescent reproductive health programs, education and information on human sexuality and responsible parenthood in schools, workplaces and communities, ducation, information and services addressing the reproductive health needs of the marginalized, older persons, women in prostitution, the differently-abled persons; and women and children in war crisis situations.

A Reproductive Health Management Council (RHMC), to be established by the Department of Health (DOH), is envisioned to implement the provisions of the bill.



Population and Development Bill Restored

HB 1808 and SB are the revitalized versions of a similar proposal that almost reached plenary deliberations during the last Congress. The Population and Development bill primarily seeks to integrate population concerns into the development strategies, planning, and implementation of programs, including resource mobilization and allocation at all levels of government.

POPDEV authors in the Lower House are Reps. JR Nereus Acosta, Gilbert Remulla and Darlene Antonino-Custodio. Under the proposal, the Commission on Population (POPCOM) to be attached to the NEDA and tasked to serve as the central coordinating body that will provide technical advice and support, including capability building to the national, regional and local agencies, including local government units on POPDEV integration; formulate a population investment plan; coordinate, monitor and evaluate the implementation of this Act; educate and inform the public about the implications of the population, development and environment variables for the sustainable development of the country; act as the government's clearinghouse and resource centre for population and development information and data through an annual State of the Philippine Population and Development Report (SPPDR); and promote and provide the mechanism and support for the full participation of civil society, the private sector and the citizenry in the planning and implementation of population and development programs and projects.

Pop-RH structures for families welfare, known as SB 62, aims to create a Family Welfare Commission at the national and provincial levels that shall act as policymaking and coordinating bodies of all family welfare management programs. It also convenes a Multi-sectoral Family Welfare Advisory Council at the national and provincial levels to act as the advisory arm of the Commission.

The envisioned national welfare program is focused on developing family planning and related mother and child health and educational activities to raise the status of women, improve the health of mothers, children and family, and reduce fertility and population growth. The program areas include: a) family planning; b) health/ maternal and child health; c) information, education and communication; d) women in development; e) education, f) labour and employment; g) environment; and h) migration and urbanization.

Philippines Lower House to Focus on MDGs: Agenda Planning Conference Discussions

A proposal to establish a special committee to ensure that the country is on track in meeting its Millennium Development Goal targets was presented to, and approved by House Speaker Jose de Venecia during the House of Representatives' Legislative Agenda Planning Conference for the 13th Congress last September 23.

Rep. Nerissa Corazon Soon-Ruiz was named as the Chairperson of this Special Committee on the MDGs. The Conference, which was attended by more than eighty (80) legislators, aimed to identify measures that the Lower House would prioritise in the 13th Congress. To accomplish this, the legislators were divided into eight workshop groups to identify policy measures to be prioritised and based on the following themes: 1) agricultural modernization, rural development and food security; 2) harnessing and regenerating natural resources for sustainable growth; 3) addressing the looming fiscal crisis; 4) investing in education and generating employment; 5) enhancing the country's economic competitiveness; 6) reforming governance and public service delivery; 7) meeting the Millennium Development Goals; and 8) creating new wealth for the Philippines.

The workshop on the MDG's was chaired by former Senator and founding Co-Chairperson of the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Leticia Ramos-Shahani. Participants included UN Resident Coordinator Deborah Landey, and Reps. Jose Carlos Lacson, Lorna Silverio, Nerissa Soon-Ruiz, Rey Aquino, and Tranquillino Carmona, Sr. Workshop discussions built on the policy proposals identified during the PLCPD-initiated round table series entitled "Crafting a Legislative Agenda in Pursuit of the MDGs," which ran from August to September this year. Said RTD series was participated in by legislators, NGO's, business groups, and the international development community. From this long list of policy measures supportive of the MDGs, workshop participants selected the most urgent policies that need to be legislated in order to speed up progress in attaining the MDGs.

Special Committee on MDG's

The creation of a special committee on the MDGs was identified by the group as the most urgent measure to be accomplished upon resumption of Session in October. Among the tasks of the special committee are the following: 1) ensure the passage of MDG-supportive bills; 2) assess the effectiveness of MDG-supportive laws; 3) institute a progress review every eighteen months; and 4) ensure that the MDGs are considered in the government budget.

Other MDG-supportive measures endorsed by the group include: 1) a resolution to explore the "debt-for-MDG swap" and the creation of an independent Debt Management Office; 2) enactment of the Reproductive Health Care bill; and 3) policy research to study and regulate migration and brain drain on skilled labour. The policy proposals that surfaced from the workshops will be included in the urgent policy measures to be tackled by the House of Representatives in the 13th Congress. These will also be presented to the Legislative-Executive Development Advisory Council (LEDAC) for consideration.



Thai Senate Felicitates Dr. Thoraya Obaid



L. to R.: Ms. Barbara Lee, Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Dr. Thoraya Obaid

During her visit to BKK for the International AIDS Conference, Hon. Sen. Suchon Chaleekrue, President, Senate of Thailand with AFPPD hosted a luncheon in honor of Dr. Thoraya Obaid, Executive Director of UNFPA. In his felicitation address, Hon. Sen. Chaleekrue praised the dedication of Dr. Obaid to champion the cause of Reproductive Health and Rights and related issues around the world. She was also given credit by Hon. Senate President for advancing women equality and equity.

Dr. Obaid in her response gave a brief on UNFPA's work and the support parliamentarians are providing including AFPPD. She said that altogether much progress has been made in the area of Reproductive Health and Rights. Citing statistical evidence, she said that in regard to advancement of women's and other issues such as HIV/AIDS, the challenges are many, requiring much more of resource directives and effort.



Dr. Thoraya Obaid receives a memento from Mr. Suchon Chaleekrue as Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit and Mr. Steven Sinding look on



Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn

Dr. Steven Sinding, Director of IPPF, Dr. Nafis Sadik, former Executive Director of UNFPA and special envoy of U.N. Secretary General were also present. The Hon. President of the Senate Mr. Chaleekrue presented to them momentums of the Thai Parliament.



Dr. Steven Sinding receives a memento from Mr. Suchon Chaleekrue



Mr. Suchon Chaleekrue gives welsome remarks as distinguished guests listen on



Above: High Level officials from UN agencies, NGOs, and parliamentarins were amongst the guests invited to the luncheon in honor of Dr. Thoraya Obaid



L. to R.: Mr. Steve Kraus, Dr. Veerapong Skolkitivat, Dr. Nafis Sadik, Mr. Nipon Wisityuthasart , Prof. Dr. Prasop Ratanakorn



High Level Policy Dialogue on ICPD in Tokyo

Population 2050, Assemble High Level Group

Population 2050, an organisation to promote high-level policy dialogue on population and R.H. issues in Japan, has been organising a high-level policy maker's symposium on south-to-south collaboration annually. The ICPD Revisited at the UN, Tokyo on the 13th –15th of September with support from the Gates Foundation and in cooperation with Partners in Development, JOICFP, UNFPA and AFPPD. The opening was chaired by Mr. Ryoichi Suzuki, Deputy Secretary General JOICFP, and received a statement from Ms. Yoko Komiyama MP and Mr. Kunio Waki, Deputy Executive Director, UNFPA.

Mr. Kunio Waki welcomed guests and during his speech informed the UNFPA conducted a Global Survey in 2003 to appraise national experiences ten years after Cairo. Some of the achievements he indicated are; increased relevance of population dynamics in development planning, integrating population concerns in socio-economic development strategies to eradicate poverty and achieve the MDG's, addressing issues of population in sustainable development, addressing issues of population ageing, addressing issues of internal migration, international migration and population distribution, increasing access to quality, safe reproductive health services, promoting reproductive rights, increased commitment to gender and equality issues, including women's empowerment and addressing gender-based discrimination and violence.

Ms. Kiyoko Ikegami, UNFPA representative in Japan chaired the sessions on Reproductive Rights and Health, including family planning, youths and adolescents.

Mr. Anwarul Chowdhury, Under-Secretary-General of the UN said, 'There is no doubt that Cairo was a landmark event. Firstly, it had the great merit of putting human beings at the heart of concerns for sustainable development as the most important and valuable resource of any nation. Secondly, for the first time, it declared that women must be the centre of our efforts to address population issues, correctly identifying reproductive health not just as relevant to family planning but as women's rights'. He added that, 'Rapid population growth is registered particularly among the group of the fifty countries where the vast majority of people live in extreme poverty and that are classified by the United Nations as least developed. The LDC's combined population is expected to nearly triple between 2000 and 2050, rising from 658 million to 1.8 billion'. The Under-Secretary-General went on to say that, 'at the core, according to the World Watch Institute in its 2003 Report, is gender inequity that tends to contribute to population growth and population increases tend to put pressure on the natural environment, including biological resources'.

Mr. Shiv Khare, Executive Director AFPPD, spoke on Sexual and Reproductive Health of Young People, where he emphasised that youth organisations be involved in population and sexual health programmes. Dr. Mehtab S. Karim of Pakistan and Dr. David Parirenyatwa, Health Minister of Zimbabwe, also provided their country experiences.

Status of Women and their Empowerment

Ms. Daniele Testelin, Councillor CIDA Canada, Dr. Sumarijati Arjoso, Chairperson BKKBN, Indonesia, Ms. Hao Linna, China, Ms. Viji Srinivasan, India, spoke on the status of women and their empowerment. Ms. Akiko Yuge, Director, UNDP, JAPAN chaired this session.

HIV/AIDS

Professor M. Nizamuddin of Columbia University gave an overview of ageing issues around the world, specifically in Japan and other Asian countries. Professor Moneer Alam of India, Mr. M. Nakahara, Counsellor, Cabinet Office of Japan, Dr. Vichai Tienthavorn, Director-General, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand gave their own country views on ageing.

Ageing Society

Dr. Jotham Musinguzi, Director, Population Secretariat, Uganda chaired the session on HIV/AIDS. Contributing was Mr. Kunii, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan and Ms. Yvette Celine Seignon Kandissounon, Health Minister of Benin. They spoke of the grave situation of HIV and AIDS in Africa.

Finally, speaker Ratu Epeli Nailatikau of Fiji chaired a session on South-to-south Collaboration in Population and Development, Mr. Jyoti Singh, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, provided an outlook for the future. He commented on the work being done by Partners in Development. He was of the view that increased south-to-south collaboration is needed and should be promoted.

The Asian Forum has been collaborating with Population 2050 in their high-level policy symposium by sponsoring members of parliament to participate. This year also, apart from Hon. Speaker of Fiji, AFPPD sponsored Rep. Jose Carlos V. Lacson to attend the symposium.

“Women must be the centre of our efforts to address population issues, correctly identifying reproductive health not just as relevant to family planning but as women's rights.”

Mr. Anwarul Chowdhury, Under Secretary General of the UN



Urgent Need for Parliamentarians to Combat and Manage HIV/AIDS AFPPD supports 1st Conference for Pacific Parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS in Suva, Fiji, October 11-13, 2004”



Pacific Parliamentarians at the PPAD Conference

The 1st Conference for the Pacific Parliamentarians on “The Role of Pacific Parliamentarians in the fight Against HIV/AIDS” took place in Suva, Fiji from October 11-13, 2004. The Conference was hosted by Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development (PPAD) in conjunction with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Secretariat of the Pacific Community) and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD). The conference saw parliamentarians from the region attending to discuss on the objective including:

1. To inform parliamentarians about HIV/AIDS, how it is transmitted, and brief them on the trend of HIV/AIDS in the Pacific region.
2. To discuss the impact of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as a wider development issue and in the context of the Millennium Development Goals.
3. To solicit political support

and commitment from Pacific Parliamentarians and national leaders in the fight against the disease. 4. To discuss practical ways to translate political commitments into actions that integrates HIV/AIDS prevention and for people living with HIV/AIDS (PLWA) into national policies and programme. 5. To foster opportunities for Pacific parliamentarians and PLWHA to jointly advocate for prevention, treatment, and support programmes on HIV/AIDS. 6. To brief parliamentarians on the regional strategy on HIV/AIDS and other initiatives currently undertaken at both the national and regional levels.

The convening of this three-day regional conference is a landmark initiative by PPAD. It immediately followed the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders meeting held in Samoa in August 2004, where the heads of governments for all Forum island countries approved the “Pacific Regional Strategy on HIV/AIDS” for the period 2004-2008. This meeting provided the first opportunity to involve Pacific Parliamentarians directly in the fight against HIV/AIDS epidemic in the region.

Hon. Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister of Fiji, delivered the opening address. The keynote speech was delivered by Dr. Nafis Sadik, Special Advisor to the UN Secretary General and Special Envoy for HIV/AIDS for Asia-Pacific. Similarly, Hon. Rau Epeli Nailatikau, Speaker of the House of Representatives, Fiji parliament delivered the welcome remarks. Dr. Mailinee Sukavejworakit, Secretary General, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, and Mr. Peter Witham, UN Resident Coordinator also addressed the audience.

“Mobilize Resources, Exchange Programs, Share Perspectives” Hon. Laisenia Qarase, Prime Minister, Fiji

Hon. Laisenia Qarase in his opening remarks acknowledged the urgent need for regional leaders to become fully conversant with the nature of HIV/AIDS, and the actions required to combat and manage it. He urged participants to rapidly develop a thorough understanding of what HIV/AIDS is, how it is spread, and what it means to sufferers, and to the social, cultural, and economic health of nations, while emphasizing the need to implement strategies to curb the incursion and spread of the disease.

According to Mr. Qarase, parliamentarians are well placed to help mobilize resource, and to use their status, both within government and in society, to champion the fight against HIV/AIDS in their respective communities. He said that parliamentarians should be involved in exchange programmes, in sharing perspectives, and should expand their knowledge further.

Political Commitment is Key- Dr. Bhushan Indu, ADB

Dr. Bhushan Indu, Director, Pacific Department, spoke on HIV/AIDS as a development issue. And more specifically on ADB experience on the fight against HIV/AIDS. His presentation, which was in three parts included firstly, a brief summary of ADB activities in support of HIV/AIDS, secondly, the lessons learnt in the fight against HIV/AIDS and what challenges lie ahead, and lastly on ADB's future plans for supporting developing member countries in fighting the epidemic.

Mr. Bhushan suggested the way ahead, saying that ADB on its part stands ready to work with all partners and developing member countries to strengthen HIV/AIDS efforts in the Pacific. He talked of the recently prepared development strategy for the Pacific and new financing mechanism for supporting HIV/AIDS activities. He ended his presentation emphasizing that determination and commitment can make a big—and needed—difference in combating HIV/AIDS.

“Information and Service Provisions remains Inadequate for Pacific People” Exerpts from Keynote Address by Dr. Nafis Sadik



Dr. Nafis Sadik

“In the Pacific, the HIV prevalence rate has reached more than 1% among women attending antenatal clinics in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea. AIDS is now the major cause of death at the Port Moresby General Hospital. High levels of sexually transmitted infections, which indicate increased risk for HIV, have also been documented in Samoa, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Vanuatu and a number of other Pacific Island countries and territories. As we have seen in the Caribbean, even a small number of infections can have a dramatic impact on small island populations.

We talk about the social and economic impact of the HIV epidemic in high prevalence countries, but in the Pacific we could reach the point where we have to talk about the very survival of countries unable to absorb the human, social and financial cost of a 10 or 20 percent infection rate. In most places in the region, HIV now remains largely concentrated among marginalized groups such as men who have sex with men, sex workers, their clients, and their partners. Unfortunately, because prevention programme coverage is still so sparse, infection rates among these groups are skyrocketing - and ultimately will not remain contained.

Monogamous women, whose only “high-risk” behaviour is being married and faithful to spouses who engage in high-risk behaviour, are being infected and then, sadly, infecting their children. This is how a generalized epidemic begins. The statistics identifying a high number of self-identified housewives as HIV infected in Papua New Guinea shows just this situation right here in the Pacific. The paradox of low risk and high vulnerability faced by women and girls worldwide is mirrored across Asia and the Pacific region. Low levels of education, unequal access to formal employment and income, as well as low social status underlie the feminization of AIDS. Fifty percent of all new infections globally are found among women and girls.

Ladies and Gentlemen, timing matters, and the Pacific has a narrow window of opportunity. Because of the dynamics of the epidemic, HIV levels may remain relatively low for many years and then explode quite rapidly. It is vital to act decisively before crossing into that epidemiological danger zone.

The Pacific is a region which has made considerable economic and development progress in the past few years. This is now seriously threatened by AIDS. The problem is that in the Pacific region, as elsewhere in the world, only a small fraction of those in need are currently receiving these lifesaving information and services. For example, only one in 50 pregnant women in the Western Pacific have access to efforts to prevent mother-to-child transmission of HIV.

Unfortunately, because overall HIV prevalence rates remain low in the Pacific region, the sense of urgency for action has yet to reach a fever pitch. However, the numbers do not lie, and there is no question that AIDS in the Pacific is fast approaching a critical turning point. Given these conditions, it is now more essential than ever that you, as key leaders in the region, meet the AIDS challenge head-on.

You all have much to offer as key strategic partners through a three-pronged approach to ratcheting up the Pacific's response to AIDS: by promoting leadership through advocacy at country and regional levels; by providing and leveraging increased resources from both donor and impacted countries; and by sharing the training and technical assistance to enhance national capacity.”

“Youth in the Center of HIV Issues” Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit

Dr. Malinee Sukavejworakit, Secretary General, AFPPD started her speech by congratulating Fiji in making Fiji a center point of the Pacific for regional and international parliamentary action. She extended her appreciation of the substantive contributions and active participation of Fiji to development.

Moving on to HIV/AIDS and the conference, Dr. Malinee said that the Pacific Conference is a much awaited step top mobilize parliamentarians of this region, we must realize that HIV/AIDS can have devastating impact because of small populations of the Pacific Islands.

Dr. Malinee said that youth are in the center of the HIV issues, and urged special emphasis to be given to them. She also urged for collaborative work amongst partners including UNAIDS, UNFPA, ADB, AFPPD and others to work for better resources to fight HIV/AIDS in the Pacific.

“Dynamic Action Overdue” Dr. Ratu Epili Nailatikau

According to Dr. Nailatikau, HIV/AIDS has become a national and regional challenge. Pacific leaders are already showing increasing commitments in the area of HIV/AIDS, however these are just beginnings of action. More needs to be done by the Pacific people.

Dr. Nailatikau expressed a need for up-scaling parliamentary support given that the challenges are increasing. Greater political commitment and willingness on the part of parliamentarians as leaders is required. Parliamentarians need to speak out more often and frequently about HIV/AIDS and how to prevent the problem. Parliamentarians also need to progress beyond talking— taking dynamic action is long overdue and must be pursued vigorously. Dr. Nailatikau said parliamentarians should consider themselves as privileged to be in a position of leadership and should note the words of the historian James Humes: The art of communication is the language of leadership”



Proposed AFPPD Activities for 2004

Professional Academic Parliamentarians Workshop on Education, Population, and Reproductive Health: March 8-9, 2005 (confirmed)

**Food Security Committee Meeting
March 2005**

**First Focus Group Meeting
March 2005**

**APA Conference
April 24-28, 2005 (confirmed)**

**Evaluation of AFPPD Programme and its Impact (External Evaluation)
April-May 2005**

**APDA Annual Seminar with AFPPD
April-May 2005**

**Regional Parliamentary Staff Training on Advocacy:
June-July 2005**

**Asian Women Parliamentarians Conference:
July-August 2005**

**General Assembly of AFPPD
October 2005**

**Second Focus Group
November 2005**

**Person-to-Person Advocacy-Hewlett Foundation:
January-December 2005**

**Asia-Pacific Reproductive and Sexual Health Conference, Kuala Lumpur (AFPPD Panel of Parliamentarians with Youth Leaders)
November 17-21, 2005**

**HIV/AIDS related events funded by UNAIDS-APLF (multi-faith meeting with parliamentarians)
To be Decided**

PLCPD Elects New Set of Officers for the 13th Congress

The Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development Foundation, Inc. held its first Annual General Assembly for the 13th Congress last July 30. With the theme, "Expanding Choices, Uplifting Lives through Effective Population and Human Development Legislation," the gathering was presided by Senator Rodolfo G. Biazon, PLCPD Co-Chairperson for the Senate.

During the gathering, PLCPD members and officers reaffirmed their commitment to push for legislation that would uplift the quality of life of Filipinos. They also reviewed the organization's achievements as regards advocacy of population, reproductive health and human development legislation during the 12th Congress.

The highlight of the gathering was the oath taking of the organization's new set of board members for the 13th Congress, who were elected by their colleagues prior to the activity. They vowed to remain united and committed to perform their responsibilities as lawmakers in enlightening the minds of their colleagues and the public to advance sound policies on reproductive health, population, and human development.

Executive Officers **Sen. Rodolfo G. Biazon**, *Co-Chairperson for the Senate*, **Rep. Juan Romeo Nereus O. Acosta**, *Co-Chairperson for the House of Representatives*, **Rep. Jose Carlos V. Lacson**, *Board Secretary*, **Rep. Lorna C. Silverio**, *Board Treasurer*, *Vice Chairpersons* are, **Rep. Gilbert Cesar C. Remulla** - *Vice-Chairperson for Luzon and PLCPD Spokesperson*, **Rep. Nerissa Corazon Soon-Ruiz** - *Vice-Chairperson for Visayas*, **Rep. Darlene Magnolia Antonino-Custodio** - *Vice-Chairperson for Mindanao*, *Chairpersons of Special Committees*, **Rep. Loretta Ann P. Rosales** - *Special Committee on Constituency*, **Rep. Emilio C.**

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