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AFPPD OFFICE BEARERS

AFPPD 12th General Assembly reaffirms Asia-Pacific parliamentarians’ commitment to achieving SDGs
On 7–9 October, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) successfully convened the 12th General Assembly in Colombo, Sri Lanka with its reaffirmed commitment to accelerate the implementation of the AFPPD Strategic Plan 2016-2019 for the remaining period up to 2019. Page 4

Kyrgyzstan elderly celebrates International Day of Older Persons
On 29 September 2017, 70 older people participated in an advance observance of the International Day of Older Persons in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Page 3

AFPPD co-organizes technical workshop promoting use of data for policy-making on ageing
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NFPPD builds capacity of Nepal women parliamentarians for SDGs

KATHMANDU, NEPAL – In September 2017, the National Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (NFPPD) organized four sessions of Capacity Building of Women Parliamentarians on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in Kathmandu, Nepal. Supported by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development's (AFPPD) small grant fund, the programme aimed to contribute to the alignment of Nepal's national plans with SDG 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages through a focus on sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Four capacity-building activities were held on 3, 22, 23 and 26 September targeting women parliamentarians from all political parties. At the time of the programme, 28% of the Parliament of Nepal was composed of women.

“The Parliament of Nepal is in the phase of drafting new bills and amending the laws. So, it is the most appropriate time to conduct sensitization programme for Nepal parliamentarians, increase their level of awareness, develop political dedication to cross-cutting issues, and eliminate of gaps,” Hon. Mr. Bhishma Nath Adhikari, MP Nepal and NFPPD Secretary-General, emphasized.

NFPPD is the member National Committee of AFPPD in Nepal.
Kyrgyzstan elderly celebrates *International Day of Older Persons*

**BISHKEK, KYRGYZSTAN** – On 29 September 2017, 70 older people participated in an advance observance of the *International Day of Older Persons* in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. This one-day celebration was led by the Babushka Adoption Foundation, in collaboration with the National Committee of Kyrgyzstan on Population and Development (NCKPD), and was partially funded by AFPPD’s small grant programme.

In spite of the unfavorable weather condition, the elder people eagerly joined the activities prepared for them, which aimed to promote active ageing in Kyrgyzstan. These included a fun run and Tai Chi class. The grandparents were also given a modern slang learning session, where they were taught of some words young people use, such as “bluetooth” and “gadget,” so they could handle “technological” conversations with their grandchildren.

Babushka Adoption Foundation also organized a traditional handcraft fair, where the older people were provided with a chance to showcase their handmade items, including knitted booties and hats, bags, pastries, etc.

**Ms. Aidai Kadyrova** of the Babushka Adoption Foundation said they planned many activities aiming to promote active lifestyle among the older persons, as well as raise their education. “We want grandparents to keep pace with the times and to know about their rights. Many of them do not know how to use the Internet; they do not have access to information. Sometimes they do not know about the benefits that they are entitled to,” she added.

*NCKPD is the member National Committee of AFPPD in Kyrgyzstan.*

*Tai Chi gymnastics was one of the activities held during the celebration of the International Day of Older Persons in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. (Photo: NCKPD)*
OCTOBER

AFPPD 12th General Assembly reaffirms Asia-Pacific parliamentarians’ commitment to achieving SDGs

The AFPPD 12th General Assembly welcomed over 150 participants, including members of parliament, AFPPD national committee staff, and strategic partners from the Asia-Pacific region. (Photo: AFPPD)

Sri Lanka warmly welcomed the participants with a display of the country’s rich and colorful cultural performance. (Photo: AFPPD)

COLOMBO, SRI LANKA – On 7–9 October, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) successfully convened the 12th General Assembly in Colombo, Sri Lanka with its reaffirmed commitment to accelerate the implementation of the AFPPD Strategic Plan 2016-2019 for the remaining period up to 2019. Over 150 participants, including members of parliament and AFPPD’s strategic partners collectively confirmed to take follow-up actions on the statements of commitment made by AFPPD over the past two years on realizing gender equality, empowering women and girls, ending child marriage, combating human trafficking, investing in youth, ensuring healthy and active ageing, and promoting universal health care, thereby contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SGDs) by 2030.
The Opening Session set the tone of the entire General Assembly under the theme of “Engaging Parliamentarians, Pursuing Human Development.” In his video opening message, AFPPD Chairperson, Hon. Prof. Keizo Takemi, from Japan emphasized the critically important role played by parliamentarians in achieving the SDGs and in addressing the strategic priority issues collectively set by AFPPD. Subsequent keynote speeches reminded the participants of the harsh yet inexcusable fact that we still could not prevent roughly 800 maternal deaths each day in the world, and underscored the imperative of policymakers’ accurate understanding of population dynamics in each country in order to ensure the right to health for all and reap a demographic dividend by investing in youth.

Hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Sustainable Development (SLPPD) headed by Hon. Mr. S. B. Dissanayake, the AFPPD General Assembly solicited high-level political leaders’ participation and their commitment to AFPPD’s mission. Among them included were chief guests, Hon. Mr. Tilak Marapana, Minister of Development Assignments and Foreign Affairs and Hon. Mr. Sarath Amunugama, Minister of Special Assignments. Also, AFPPD General Assembly representatives were warmly welcomed by Hon. Mr. Karu Jayasuriya and Hon. Mr. Thilanga Sumathipala, currently serving as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, respectively, who advocated for appropriate budget allocations for achieving the SDGs.

Following the 12th General Assembly main session, SLPPD also organized a mock youth parliament, which has been practiced in Sri Lanka for years. Advocating for youth political participation through a mock parliament was among the recommendations made by the AFPPD Standing Committee on Investing in Youth in March and June 2017. SLPPD spearheaded implementing this recommendation, demonstrating a good practice to AFPPD’s other member national committees. “The Sri Lanka Youth Parliament comprises elected members who not only participate in a regular mock parliament but also utilize grants to implement their own social projects in their respective constituencies,” Hon. Mr. Dilan Perera explained the long-invested and institutionalized model of the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament. Many representatives from AFPPD national committees expressed their determination to implement a mock youth parliament, emulating the Sri Lanka model.
AFPPD forges partnerships with Plan International, UNESCO


Ms. Senait Gebregziabher Bayessa, Plan International Asia Regional Director, highlighted that the MOU would target gender inequality and violation of child rights in Asia. AFPPD will provide support to Plan International Asia Regional Office in strengthening advocacy work with parliamentarians in Asia. In the same way, Plan International will provide technical guidance to AFPPD on relevant areas of work, specifically on the work of the Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment and the Standing Committee on Investing in Youth.

UNESCO, on the other hand, will be collaborating with AFPPD on parliamentary advocacy promoting comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in the Asia-Pacific. Mr. Kabir Singh, Senior Project Officer for HIV Health and Wellbeing, UNESCO Bangkok, noted the importance of partnership with AFPPD in terms of raising awareness and clarifying misconceptions surrounding CSE to encourage political support.

[Image of people shaking hands, caption: Hon. Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, MP Thailand and AFPPD Secretary-General and Ms. Senait Gebregziabher Bayessa, Regional Director, Plan International, signed a memorandum of agreement strengthening AFPPD’s strategic partnership with Plan International. (Photo: AFPPD)]

[Image of people shaking hands, caption: Mr. Kabir Singh, Senior Project Officer for HIV Health and Wellbeing, UNESCO Bangkok, and Ms. Ann Sudmalis, MP Australia and Vice-Chairperson of AFPPD, sealed an agreement paving the way to collaborations on parliamentary advocacy promoting comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) in the Asia-Pacific. (Photo: AFPPD)]
**IAPPD Executive Director stresses population, urbanization impacts on environment**

**NEW DELHI, INDIA** – In October 2017, Mr. Manmohan Sharma, Executive Director of the Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD), was invited to participate in Lok Sabha TV’s (government television network covering the lower house of the Parliament) discussion programme, Astitva. The discussion focused on the challenges of increasing population and urbanization, as well as its impact on the environment.

Mr. Sharma spoke of the demographic change in the country since independence and highlighted the work of the government and non-government organizations (NGOs) to stabilize the population growth. He also talked about the recently concluded international workshop, Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in the Interlinkage between Population Issues and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which stressed on health as a fundamental human right and an essential pre-requisite in achieving sustainable development. To that end, he added, ensuring universal health coverage (UHC) would be critical.

IAPPD is the member National Committee of AFPPD in India.

**Pakistan gov’t to strengthen support for blind people**

**ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN** – On 14 October 2017, Hon. Deputy Speaker Murtaza Javed Abbasi, National Assembly of Pakistan, and member of the Pakistan Parliamentarians’ Group on Population, Reproductive Health and Development (PPGPRD), stressed the government’s obligations and commitment to providing all possible support to blind people, including proper education and training on market-oriented skills. Hon. Deputy Speaker Abbasi addressed the participants during the inaugural session of the Second National IT Conference for PWDs in Islamabad, Pakistan. In conjunction with the celebration of the World White Cane Safety Day, the event aimed to address the issues being faced by blind persons.

PPGPRD is the member National Committee of AFPPD in Pakistan.
CEFM addressed in PLCPD training for legislative staff

TAGAYTAY CITY, PHILIPPINES – On 24–27 October 2017, the Philippine Legislators’ Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) conducted an issue orientation and policy advocacy training-workshop on ending child, early and forced marriages (CEFM) in Tagaytay City, Philippines. The activity—which covered topics, such as, the prevalence and impact of CEFM on girls’ health and development; national and international frameworks for addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG), and CEFM; and gender in Islam and the Code of Muslim Personal Laws—was attended by a number of legislative staff within and outside PLCPD.

The training-workshop featured capacity-building activities on advocacy skills, such as, message development, stakeholder analysis, political mapping, and advocacy planning. The participants practiced the skills learned in this portion during the planning workshop to identify advocacy tracks for addressing the issue of CEFM.

The four-day activity was organized in collaboration with Oxfam and the Philippine Business for Social Progress, as well as the ARMM-based non-government organizations, Al-Mujadilah Development Foundation and United Youth of the Philippines (UnYPhil)-Women. Supported by the Global Affairs Canada, the training-workshop was part of PLCPD’s activities under the Oxfam Canada initiative, Creating Spaces to Take Action on Violence against Women and Girls. The project aims to contribute to an enabling policy environment for preventing VAWG.

PLCPD is the member National Committee of AFPPD in the Philippines.
First World NCD Congress engages Asian parliamentarians

CHANDIGARH, INDIA – On 5 November 2017, Hon. Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, Secretary-General, Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) and Member of Parliament, Thailand, participated, as faculty member for the Parliamentarian Forum during the First World Non-communicable Disease (NCD) Congress held from 4 to 6 November in Chandigarh, India. Jointly organized by the World NCD Federation, Partnership to Fight Chronic Disease (PFCD) and World Health Organization (WHO), the forum invited members of parliament from India, Thailand and Maldives, and various stakeholders.

During the forum, Hon. Dr. Sirathranont advocated for the integration of gender equality and women’s empowerment when crafting policies related to NCDs. He also talked about the functions of Thailand’s One-stop Crisis Centre (OSCC) in the context of NCDs. Its establishment in 2013 was initiated by the Parliament of Thailand in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Ministry of Labor, Ministry of Social Development and Human Sector, and Ministry of Interior.

Tajikistan district gears up for pilot programme on cervical cancer screening

RASHT, TAJIKISTAN – On 10 November 2017, the National Council on Population and Development (NCPD) under the Parliament of Tajikistan organized the Workshop on Consideration and Discussion of the Pilot Programme for Screening of Cervical Cancer in the Rasht District of the Republic of Tajikistan. The workshop catered to the residents of the said district and had in attendance H.E. Mr. Hajime Kitaoka, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to the Republic of Tajikistan, Mr. Loikzoda Kanoatsho Kholik, Chairman of the Rasht government local executive body, Mrs. Aziza Homidova, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Mr. Saymuddin Muhiddinov, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), local government staff, and NCPD members. The workshop recommendations were sent to the Parliament of Tajikistan, which would then be forwarded to relevant government units for action.

NCPD is the member National Committee of AFPPD in Tajikistan.
More than three decades ago, the first cases of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) were reported. Since then, 76 million have become infected with HIV and 35 million died from acquired immune deficiency syndrome-related (AIDS) illnesses.

The epidemic has brought to the table collaborative efforts aiming to decrease the number of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths. Through these work, HIV, while chronic, is now a manageable condition.

In the Asia-Pacific, in spite of the available innovative tools to prevent HIV, the rate of decrease in the new HIV infection cases remains slower compared with previous years. Data shows that more than 250,000 people in the region get newly infected annually.

The Asia-Pacific, AIDS is not over yet, but it can be.

AFPPD parliamentarians are one with rest of the world in ensuring that everyone living with and affected by HIV has access to quality HIV prevention, treatment and support. In line with the global leadership of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), our parliamentarians are committed to ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.

“Thailand has been a global leader on HIV prevention and treatment, in line with the roll-out of the universal health coverage (UHC) in 2002. Through the National AIDS Committee, it ensured that policies are in place, including patients’ access to antiretroviral therapy (ART). However, ending the epidemic by 2030 remains to be a challenge amidst issues with sex workers and men having sex with men (MSMs). This challenge should be tackled in the national strategy, including public health reform.”

– Hon. Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, MP Thailand, and AFPPD Secretary-General

“The existing law in the Philippines was crafted during the time when HIV/AIDS wasn’t a problem yet in the country. But now that it is an epidemic, we need a stronger law. Our new HIV/AIDS law is rights-driven. It will educate the general public and encourage voluntary testing of people at risk of HIV infection. The new law will also strengthen the HIV/AIDS council because we want to include more civil society representation, including persons living with HIV.”

– Hon. Rep. Teddy Baguilat, Jr., MP Philippines, and AFPPD Vice-Chairperson

“Estimates of the number of people infected are currently 276 thousand in Indonesia (Indonesian Minister of Social and Welfare, 2017). The actual number is estimated to be 10 or even 99 times more as some people are not willing to have themselves tested. We need serious efforts and commitment to address these challenges; renew our efforts in advocacy and effectively monitor the implementation of existing policy formed to tackle HIV/AIDS issues.”

– Hon. Ms. Ermalena Muslim Hasbullah, MP Indonesia

“I am sure that with our honest and joint efforts, we can control the deadly disease and ensure a healthy and strong world. The National HIV and AIDS Strategic Framework sets the direction of Pakistan’s HIV and AIDS response. The government has allocated considerable financial resources to prevent and cure HIV AIDS.”

– Hon. Deputy Speaker Murtaza Javed Abbasi, MP Pakistan
AFPPD partners with UNAIDS

BANGKOK, THAILAND – In December 2017, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) received technical support funding from the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The partnership will contribute to programmes engaging Asia-Pacific parliamentarians—bringing them in as key national advocates—in the fast-tracking of HIV/AIDS prevention and response in their respective countries.

As part of the project, AFPPD will produce evidence-based, country-specific HIV-related fact sheets and briefing materials for knowledge-sharing and as tools to raise parliamentarians’ further awareness on the topic. AFPPD will also conduct capacity building activities for key parliamentarians and political leaders in priority countries to exercise their legislative power and oversight roles in accelerating the HIV/AIDS response.

AFPPD co-organizes technical workshop promoting use of data for policy-making on ageing

CHIANG MAI, THAILAND – On 5–6 December 2017, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), HelpAge International and East West Center (EWC) jointly organized the Workshop on Effective Use of Data for Policy Making on Ageing in Chiang Mai, Thailand. Supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the workshop brought together more than 90 participants, including eight members of parliament from the Islamic Republic of Iran, Malaysia, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam. Government officials, National Transfer Accounts (NTA) experts, academic experts, and representatives from civil society organizations (CSOs) from 19 Asian countries were also in attendance. The workshop concluded with a collective call for the institutionalization of NTA data.

In his opening remarks, Hon. Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, AFPPD Secretary-General and Member of Parliament, Thailand, recognized that ageing was no longer a national issue, but a regional and global one. “Ageing requires international cooperation and collective action. This workshop comes at an opportune time to discuss, using the NTA methodology, how data can guide policy-making to enable ageing countries to prepare for this rapid demographic change,” he pointed out.

Using the NTA methodology, the workshop examined how data could map resource flows to reveal disparities in later life, which could support policy-making that enables countries to prepare for rapid demographic ageing.

Hon. Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, MP Thailand and AFPPD Secretary-General, welcomed the participants of the Workshop on Effective Use of Data for Policy Making on Ageing. (Photo: HelpAge International)
Briefing Cards for Parliamentarians

The briefing cards highlight evidence-based good policy practices and legislation on issues related to gender equality and women’s empowerment, investing in youth, and active ageing. The Vietnamese version was launched in August 2017.

**Final copies:** distributed to 30 National Committees and 3 Associate Members.

**Languages:** English, Lao, Russian and Vietnamese

Visit to the Youth Parliament, Visit to the Parliament of Sri Lanka, and National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting

9 October, Colombo, Sri Lanka

**PARTICIPANT STATISTICS**

Total: 176

- Members of Parliament: 82
  - Male: 61
  - Female: 21
- Parliamentary Staff, Government and Sri Lanka Youth Parliament: 36
- Resource Persons: 25
- SLPPD staff and volunteers: 25
- AFPPD Staff: 8

**Language:** English

AFPPD 12th General Assembly

7–8 October, Colombo, Sri Lanka

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AFPPD would like to thank our donors, National Committees and Members of Parliament for their valuable support throughout 2017. AFPPD would also like to thank NPPPD, Nepal; NCKPD, Kyrgyzstan; IAPPD, India; PPGPRD, Pakistan; PLCPD, Philippines; and NCPD, Tajikistan for their contributions to this Fourth Quarter Newsletter.

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