Concept Note

AFPPD 1st Standing Committee Meeting on Active Ageing

9:00 am – 12:45 pm
8 September 2016 | Hanoi, Vietnam

Purpose:
The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) will convene the first meeting of the Standing Committee on Active Ageing on 8 September 2016 to strategize and prioritize issues related to ageing to be addressed as a regional network of parliamentarians for the next three years during the AFPPD’s Strategic Cycle 2016-2019. The meeting is expected to consolidate comments and recommendations made by Standing Committee members, taking into account experts’ and prospective Standing Committee members’ inputs. Meeting outcomes will be presented to the 81st AFPPD Executive Committee Meeting on November 3 for approval and further action. Based on the AFPPD Executive Committee’s decision, the AFPPD Secretariat will draw up a draft implementation plan for AFPPD’s national, regional and global-level advocacy activities for 2017 and beyond.

Thematic Questions: How best can the Asian Forum Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) play an effective and impactful role as a regional network of parliamentarians to advocate and mainstream active ageing in global and regional agenda, while translating government commitments into national actions.

A. What specific issues do the AFPPD member countries at different stages of ageing and development face in terms of safety/security, health and economic and social participation of the elderly?

B. What common agenda can countries at the different stages of ageing and economic development share for mutual learning and knowledge sharing through AFPPD activities? What will be the optimal sub-regional, regional or specific grouping for AFPPD’s activities on ageing?

C. According to available evidence and case studies, what are the good practices and lessons learned in establishing and implementing a comprehensive, holistic and sustainable social security system to address the needs of elderly populations?

Expected Outcomes:

A1. Increased knowledge and understanding on gaps and needs of the AFPPD member countries’ ageing related national plans, policies and legislation;
A2. Increased awareness of the role of parliamentarians and the imperative of political will to establish and/or maintain a proper social security system that anticipates population ageing and fertility decline;

B1. Increased understanding on ageing specific regional and global commitments including the Madrid International Plan for Action on Ageing and the WHO’s Global Strategy and Action Plan on Ageing and Health in order to strengthen commitment towards incorporating older persons into policy making processes to leave no older persons behind;

B2. Improved knowledge on good practices, challenges, and policy options in responding to population ageing and promoting active and healthy ageing from a life course approach;

C1. Increased awareness and understanding of what constitutes an age-friendly policy and legislation and financial implications to implement corresponding age-friendly programmes;

C2. Increased knowledge and information sharing among parliamentarians and partners on how to implement policies and legislation that take into account older persons’ experiences as well as families and communities.

Participants:

1) Members of the AFPPD Standing Committee on Active Ageing
2) Representatives from AFPPD member National Committees (which have not yet nominated a Standing Committee member)
3) Experts from the ADB, HelpAge International, UNESCAP, UNFPA, and WHO.

Format:

The meeting will use a participatory format as much as possible to create the opportunities for inclusive and diverse discussion on challenges and opportunities to address ageing from national, regional and global perspectives. In order to have a constructive discussion to generate expected outcomes, the meeting will rely on experts’ inputs upfront at the first three thematic sessions, followed by an open discussion to consolidate recommendations on the AFPPD’s future activities in the area of population ageing.

The first session will address specific issues to be addressed and existing gaps in Asia-Pacific countries’ ageing policies and legislation. The second session will focus on regional and global commitments that need to be accounted and can be used as a guideline for effective national policymaking and legislative actions. The third session is expected to facilitate a discussion on good practices and lessons learned toward a comprehensive, holistic and sustainable national security system to address challenges faced by Asia-Pacific elderly populations. A particular emphasis will be
placed on the available and reliable data as well as gaps in ageing related information, and an evidence-based gender-sensitive approach to tackle ageing issues.

**Attachments:** (1) Provisional Agenda; (2) List of data sources on ageing by country; (3) Reference data on GNI, ageing stages, and pension coverage.

**Background:**

The Asia-Pacific region is rapidly ageing. Challenges faced by each country are extremely complex and varied. A majority of AFPPD member countries are low-middle income, pre-ageing societies. However, some Asia-Pacific countries’ doubling time of elderly populations from 7% to 14% is projected to be equivalent to or shorter than Japan’s 25 years, the most aged society in the world. The year 2015/2016 also marked a critical juncture as the regional average dependency ratio hit the bottom, showing an overall upward trend. Increasing old-age dependency ratios will mean fewer employed people will have to support a growing number of older persons. Potential support ratios measured by the number of working-age persons per one older adult aged 65 and older will decline by 30-70% over 2015-2050 for Asia-Pacific countries.¹ Yet, the current pension coverage ratios of the AFPPD member countries range from virtually zero or extremely low (Pakistan-2%; Cambodia-5%; Indonesia-8%) to a full coverage for few members including low-income countries such as Kyrgyzstan and Mongolia.² As for health, most low-middle income countries have not yet even launched universal health coverage (UHC). These factors will pose significant economic and policy implications to many of the AFPPD low-middle income member countries. A strain on social security systems, infrastructure and the provision of health care services will greatly affect the well-being of the increasing elderly population in the region.

Faced with these complex national-level ageing issues, the regional and global commitments made by governments can serve as a guideline to fill the gaps in existing policies and legislation at the national level. For example, the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing (MIPAA), adopted in 2002 at the Second World Assembly on Ageing, focuses on mainstreaming older persons in development, advancing health and well-being into old age, ensuring enabling and supportive environments. MIPAA calls for changes in attitudes, policies and practices to ensure that older persons are not viewed simply as welfare beneficiaries but as active participants in the development process whose rights must be respected. The G7 Leaders’ Declaration and the G7 Ise-Shima Vision for Global Health substantively integrated the Declaration and Recommendations to the G7 Ise-Shima adopted by the Global Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (GCPPD) co-organized by the AFPPD in April 2016. The G7 Leaders’ Declaration recalls for the Active Ageing Movement in the G7 countries and beyond.³ It also specifically refers to the WHO Strategic Plan and

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² HelpAge Watch Reports 2015.
Action on Ageing and Health. These regional and global commitments need to be accounted while being used as a guideline for adopting and implementing most effective and age-friendly national policies and legislation.

While country contexts vary, designing a comprehensive, holistic and sustainable national policy and legislation to respond to ageing will be AFPPD members’ common agenda regardless of the stage of ageing or economic development. Evidence from aged societies show that a life cycle approach, consistent with the principle of the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, should be the foundation for addressing ageing issues. A comprehensive social security system comprising major pillars such as pension, medical care, childcare, and long-term care systems can support people throughout their lifetime. Available and reliable data as well as lessons learned from the aged societies such as Japan also indicate that in order to make a social security system sustainable, a multi-dimensional, holistic older person care system needs to be carefully designed. Such a system may include but not be limited to a welfare system that finances older person facilities, public assistance, and disability protection, and long-term care services and insurance schemes. Most recently, Japan’s older person care has evolved into an integrated community care system, in which home and health care as well as long-term care are coordinated through integrated community care support centers equipped with care managers. Depending solely on older person facilities turned out to be neither financially sustainable nor age-friendly to ensure a dignified and quality of life for older persons at the last stage of their lives.

As we enter the first year of the SDGs era, much remains to be done in mainstreaming further ageing into relevant policy domains at the national level. As the 2030 Agenda explicitly states, the role of parliamentarians are critically important in advancing active ageing. They are in a unique position in mainstreaming ageing in global, regional and national agenda, taking both a top-down approach to the complex policymaking and legislation for establishing and implementing an elderly-friendly social security system and a bottom-up approach to listen to voices of older persons, their families and communities as an integral part of effective solutions. The AFPPD needs to be at the forefront to ensure that older persons are not left behind.

About AFPPD: The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) is a network of 29 national committees of parliamentarians from Asia-Pacific countries. AFPPD promotes advocacy and parliamentary actions on population and development issues at the global, regional and national levels. For the past 35 years, AFPPD has been playing a crucial role in engaging parliamentarians across the region in a wide variety of issues related to population and development. AFPPD’s current model for change is aimed at educating and motivating parliamentarians to take up the challenge of bringing about legislative reforms and drive change on population and development issues outlined in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and

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4 WHO’s policy framework on Active Ageing (WHA52.7, 1999; WHO 2002) is another earlier document guiding Member States on ageing policies.
Development (ICPD PoA), the ICPD Beyond 2014, as well as the Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

AFPPD is governed by the General Assembly; managed by the Executive Committee; advised by three Standing Committees on its strategic priorities; and supported by the Secretariat located in Bangkok, Thailand. Three Standing Committees approved by the 11th AFPPD General Assembly in October 2015 are: the Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Women’s Empowerment; the Standing Committee on Investing in Youth; and the Standing Committee on Active Ageing.