AFPPD-LAPPD Parliamentarians Workshop
Legislating for the Full Achievement of the SDGs/ICPD Goals and Targets

Co-organized by
Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD)
Lao Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (LAPPD)

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Background:

The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) is a network of 29 National Committees of parliamentarians from Asia-Pacific. 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 played a crucial role in engaging parliamentarians across the region in addressing a wide variety of issues related to population and development, specifically laid out in the Programme of Action in the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA).

As a member of AFPPD, the Lao Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (LAPPD) has been active since its establishment in 2003. LAPPD parliamentarians have participated in AFPPD activities, striving to legislate and provide effective oversight on the implementation of laws, policies, and strategies related to population and development, specifically in the areas of reproductive health and gender equality, including Law on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women and Children (2014) and Trafficking in Persons Law (2016).

Despite her recent efforts and endeavors, Lao PDR continues to face numerous population and health related challenges. Nearly 60 percent of Lao PDR’s population are estimated to be younger than 25 years old. Trafficking of children remains rampant. Early marriage is particularly common among girls in rural areas who often marry at the age of 16 or 17 years, depriving them of the opportunity to receive education and attain their full potential. People in Lao PDR also face challenges encompassing the lowest level of health expenditure as percentage of GDP (1.7%) in the world, among the shortest healthy life expectancies in the region (male 57; female 59), income insecurity among the elderly with the lowest pension coverage rates and below average GNI in the region. Improving the quality of education and health services in general, and providing vocational training and life skills development opportunities for young boys and girls, in particular, are imperative for Lao PDR to reap a demographic dividend. Addressing health needs for all population groups is critically urgent.

AFPPD has been working closely with LAPPD as well as other National Committee members to mainstream the ICPD PoA in the 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted in September 2015 by all UN Member States. As explicitly stated in the 2030 Agenda document, the role of parliamentarians is critically important in achieving the SDGs, and turning the SDGs and ICPD PoA commitments into meaningful change for women/girls, youth and ageing populations.
Against this backdrop, LAPPD and AFPPD are co-organizing a multi-stakeholders workshop “Legislating for the full achievement of the SDGs/ICPD goals and targets” under the auspices of UNFPA. Currently, LAPPD is taking part in the overview of laws and other legislation regarding population development issues, making a plan for amendment and law drafting for 2016-2020 while formulating a new strategic plan for 2016-2020. Therefore, it is timely to forge multi-stakeholders partnerships among the LAPPD member parliamentarians, representatives from the Government, civil society organizations, and international organizations such as UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF, which jointly signed a Letter of Agreement on the implementation of the new country programme in December 2016. LAPPD will mobilize representatives from various government agencies, including the Ministry of Planning and Investment, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education and Sports, Lao Statistics Bureau, Lao Women’s Union, and Lao Youth Union.

The overall goal of this workshop is to educate and motivate Laotian parliamentarians to address population and development issues within the 2030 Agenda framework, further strengthening the parliamentarians’ advocacy skills to champion targeted priority issues. In so doing, a special focus will be placed on Lao PDR’s development plans including the 8th Five-Year National Socio-Economic Development Plan (2016-2020), National Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of Violence against Women and Violence against Children 2014-2020, and National Strategy and Plan of Action on the Prevention and Elimination of Child Labour for the Period 2014-2020. AFPPD Strategic Priorities Framework (2016-2019) will also be taken into consideration in priority setting for the AFPPD-LAPPD collaborative work for activities under the current strategic cycle. The workshop will roll out AFPPD’s resource materials including Parliamentarians Briefing Cards (2016) which focuses on good practices on legislation, policies and programmes related to gender equality and women’s empowerment, investing in youth and active ageing.

**Workshop’s objectives:**

1. To better inform Lao Members of Parliament (MPs) on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) in relation to the AFPPD Strategic Priorities Framework and the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) agenda, their targets and indicators, focusing on national commitments and priorities;
2. To increase MPs’ knowledge of international standards and good practices on ICPD-related legislation and policies, especially related to AFPPD’s strategic priority issues;
3. To increase MPs’ capacity to legislate for full achievement of AFPPD’s strategic priority targets, including gender equality and women’s empowerment, universal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, information and education, and specific needs of young people and elderly populations;
4. To expand the pool of parliamentarians who have sufficient knowledge to advocate for AFPPD’s strategic priority issues and the ICPD agenda.

**Expected results:**

1. Increased understanding by LAPPD members on the role of AFPPD, focusing on AFPPD-LAPPD synergies and opportunities.
2. Increased awareness by LAPPD members on AFPPD’s strategic issues (women and girls, youth, and ageing populations) in the context of Lao PDR’s situations.
3. Identified priority issues for LAPPD to work on within Lao PDR’s various National Plans as well as AFPPD’s Strategic Framework 2017-2019.
(4) Development of a cohesive set of advocacy action plans for LAPPD members to act as champion policy advocates on prioritizing ICPD issues in the national planning and implementation of the SDGs.

**Target audience/participants:** 40 participants comprising of parliamentarians of Lao PDR (LAPPD current and prospective members), representatives of government institutions, international organizations and civil society organizations, national and international experts.