Concept Note

Purpose:
The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) reaches a critical milestone in October 2017 at the 12th General Assembly, completing the first two years of the current strategic cycle of 2016-2019. The 12th General Assembly offers AFPPD's relevant stakeholders, namely, AFPPD member National Committees, the Executive Committee, Standing Committees, the Secretariat, and strategic partners, the first opportunity to jointly evaluate the implementation status of the AFPPD Strategic Plans (2016-2019).

The overall purpose of the 12th General Assembly is therefore to critically review mid-term progress towards the expected results of the current Strategic Plan, thus contributing to the full achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and accelerating the effective implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD PoA) Beyond 2014. The 12th General Assembly is then expected to confirm the direction of the next two years of AFPPD's work as a regional parliamentary network in Asia and the Pacific.

Background:
AFPPD has spearheaded its parliamentarian advocacy and research work to mainstream gender equality and women's empowerment, investing in youth, and healthy and active aging into national, regional and global arenas since the last General Assembly in October 2015. The first two years of the AFPPD Strategic Cycle (2016-2019) coincided with the SDGs era. This has enabled AFPPD to mainstream AFPPD's strategic issues to the extent possible, in the ICPD framework as well as in the 2030 Agenda.

AFPPD's work has thus far generated some tangible results, facilitating parliamentarians' concrete follow-up actions in advocacy, legislation and budget allocations at the national level. AFPPD’s communication and knowledge products, such as the Briefing Cards for Parliamentarians, increased the pool of parliamentarians knowledgeable about AFPPD strategic priority issues. Legislation analysis and factsheets facilitated meaningful knowledge sharing among parliamentarians for collective action. Building strategic and technical partnerships has proven not only effective in maximizing AFPPD's impact, but also efficient in utilizing limited resources in addressing common sub-regional and regional strategic priority issues. In order to politically influence and make policy recommendations for government leaders, AFPPD parliamentarians drafted and adopted four statements of commitments in 2016-2017, focusing on child marriage,¹ human trafficking,² gender equality and women's empowerment,³ and universal health coverage as a means of addressing all target population groups, women and girls, youth, older persons, especially vulnerable populations.⁴

In conducting the mid-term evaluation of the AFPPD Strategy, the following needs to be noted. Over the past two years, AFPPD's parliamentary advocacy and research work has been guided by three key documents. First, the AFPPD Strategic Plans, approved by the 11th General Assembly in October 2015. This document defines the Results Chains and Accountability Framework, with three strategic outcomes, namely, national capacity building of AFPPD member national committees, strategic partnership building, and political influence at the national, regional, and global levels, as well as one management outcome of good governance of AFPPD.

Progress towards each strategic outcome needs to be assessed by individual national committees.

Second, the AFPPD constitution (2015). This amended constitution (2015) approved by the 11th General Assembly further delineated how “good governance” can be achieved by defining the roles and obligations of all AFPPD stakeholders, especially, the three newly approved Standing Committees on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment, Investing in Youth, and Active Ageing. For the first time in AFPPD's history, the role of Standing Committees was clearly and explicitly defined as providing strategic recommendations to the Executive Committee. The efficacy of the Standing Committees in directing AFPPD's strategic direction needs to be evaluated.

Last but not least, the Standing Committees Strategic Priorities Framework completes AFPPD's strategic guidelines. This framework was proposed by AFPPD Secretariat, deliberated by the Standing Committees, and approved by the Executive Committee in April 2016. The framework has guided and defined AFPPD's work to be planned and implemented in a cohesive manner for three strategic population groups, women and girls, youth, and older persons, with three common cross-sectional themes of safety and security, health, and participation. Whether or not this framework has enabled cross-pollination of ideas during the past two years needs to be critically reviewed.

As such, the 12th General Assembly is structured to have three strategic sessions -- national committees reporting session, partners session, and political influence session -- and one governance session, following the AFPPD Strategic Plans-Results Chains and Accountability Framework. Progress made thus far will be evaluated against three expected strategic outcomes: national capacity building, strategic partnership building, and political influence; and one management outcome of good governance. The three strategic sessions are also intended to use consistently the Standing Committees Strategic Priorities Framework for their deliberation and evaluation of achievements made so far and challenges faced by AFPPD's members in achieving common goals in the areas of women and girls, youth, and older persons.

The last governance session reviews the viability and effectiveness of the newly introduced governance structure and practices, recommended by the Task Force for Transparency, Accountability and Governance in 2015 and defined by the subsequent constitutional amendment, to further improve AFPPD's operational transparency and accountability. Given the prevailing funding constraints for global health, in particular family planning, AFPPD's financial sustainability and viability to continue implementing impactful activities will be critically reviewed. The 12th General Assembly will also offer the first occasion in which the 2015 constitutional amendment on female representation will be tested.

The 12th General Assembly will provide AFPPD and its strategic partners with an opportune occasion to take stock of achievements, critically reviewing the actions taken so far and ways forward for the remaining period of the Strategic Plan. Prevailing external conditions are not necessarily conducive to AFPPD’s ability to further generate expected results. Growing conservatism has negatively affected women's and children's rights to universal access to health, including sexual and reproductive health services and information, and limited financial resources have been made available to AFPPD. In order to achieve collectively AFPPD’s strategic

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7 AFPPD. AFPPD Standing Committees and Strategic Priorities in 2016-2019. [https://www.afppd.org/Resources/standing-committee-priorities-v-5.pdf](https://www.afppd.org/Resources/standing-committee-priorities-v-5.pdf)
8 AFPPD Constitution (2015). Article 7.2: THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY states "The General Assembly is the highest decision-making organ of the AFPPD and shall generally be held once every two years or as determined by the General Assembly. Each member organization shall send at least one representative to the General Assembly of the AFPPD. Where member organizations send more than one representative to the General Assembly, at least one representative shall be female. Members shall each have one vote."
goals for the remaining years of the Strategic Cycle, AFPPD will need to stay even more focused than before on its vision and mission, effectively engaging parliamentarians, pursuing human development.

**Objectives:**
- Critically review AFPPD’s mid-term progress towards the expected strategic outcomes of the Strategic Plan (2016-2019): national capacity building, partnership building, and political influence in AFPPD’s strategic priority issues of women and girls, youth, and older persons.
- Evaluate improvements made so far and challenges that remain, in strengthening AFPPD’s good governance, operational transparency and accountability, in accordance with the amended constitution (2015);
- Deliberate ways forward to work on AFPPD strategic priority issues in an effective, impactful, relevant, efficient and sustainable manner, for the remaining period of the Strategic Plan.

**Expected results:**
- Gain increased understanding and in-depth knowledge by all participating AFPPD stakeholders about AFPPD’s two guiding strategic frameworks and the amended constitution (2015), especially the expected strategic outcomes and management outcome in the Results Chains and Accountability Framework, and common understanding on mid-term progress made towards the expected results;
- Revisit, evaluate, and revise, if deemed necessary, the Strategic Plan and the Standing Committees Strategic Priorities Framework, as well as governance documents to enable AFPPD to deliver maximum impacts with limited resources, thereby improving its leveraging capability as a network of parliamentarians;
- Agree on intermediate goals of each Standing Committee to work towards collectively as a regional network of parliamentarians, in the areas of selected issues of the Standing Committees Strategic Priorities Framework.

**Participants:**
110 participants. The conference will bring together about 90 parliamentarians and staff members from the Asia-Pacific region, 10 experts from strategic partner organizations, from civil society organizations, International Organizations, and academic institutions, and 10 AFPPD Secretariat staff.

**Organizers:**
The conference is co-organized by the AFPPD and its member national committee, the Sri Lankan Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Sustainable Development (SLPPD), hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka, with support from the Government of Japan (the Japan Trust Fund) and the UNFPA.

**Dates:** 7-8 October 2017
The 12th General Assembly will follow the 83rd Executive Committee Meeting on October 6, and will be followed by AFPPD’s related events on 9 October 2017 (AFPPD delegation’s visit to the Parliament of Sri Lanka; Mock Parliament for Youth; and AFPPD National Committees Strategy Meeting).

**Venues:** To be indicated in invitation letters.