

## **“The Canberra Declaration”**

On 29 and 30 June 2004, eighty women parliamentarians and ministers from Asia and the Pacific gathered for a two-day meeting in Canberra, Australia, entitled "A Woman's Perspective: Population, Development and Reproductive Health in the Asia-Pacific Region".

The meeting was co-organized by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the Australian All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (APPGPD) and the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance (ARHA) in cooperation with UNFPA and the Australian Parliament.

Below is the declaration adopted unanimously by the women parliamentarians on their commitment to population, development and reproductive health issues.

## **FINAL DECLARATION**

### **Asia Pacific Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference**

**Canberra, 2004**

#### **Preamble**

We, Asia Pacific women Parliamentarians and Ministers participating in the AFPPD meeting in Canberra on 29 and 30 June 2004 at the Asia Pacific Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference on population, development and reproductive health:

Reaffirm on the occasion of the 10th anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) the following cornerstone principles of population and development related programmes - advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, the elimination of all kinds of violence against women and ensuring control of their own fertility.

#### **Equality and Equity and the Empowerment of Women**

Call on countries to commit to increasing women's participation and representation in political, economic and public life; promote women's education, skill development and employment; specifically in rural areas, eliminate all practices that discriminate against women in the workplace, in accessing credit, and in controlling property and social security; and develop measures to lessen the burden of domestic responsibilities enabling employees of both sexes to harmonize their family and work responsibilities.

Call on countries to promote equal participation of women and men in all areas of family and household responsibilities including, among others, responsible parenthood, sexual and reproductive behaviour, prevention of sexually transmitted infections and shared control in and contribution to family income and children's welfare.

Call on countries to give particular attention to older women by taking measures to promote their income security and provision of social services including health care.

Call on countries to ensure the safety and rights of female international migrant workers and to strengthen legal measures to combat trafficking in humans, especially women and children.

Call on countries to commit both financial and human resources for the implementation of poverty reduction strategies.

#### **Elimination of All Kinds of Violence Against Women**

Call on countries to eliminate all forms of exploitation, abuse, harassment and gender-based acts of violence against women, adolescents and girls that result in physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering including threats, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty whether in public or private life.

Call on countries to develop programs for the rehabilitation and retraining of women in the sex industry.

Call on countries to sign the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women.

Call on countries to promote equal participation of women and men in the elimination of all forms of violence and exploitation.

Urge the development of responsible, appropriate and culturally sensitive media guidelines for the reporting and editorializing of sexual violence.

### **Reproductive Health and Control of Fertility**

Call on countries to assure the right of men and women to be informed and to have access to safe, effective, affordable and acceptable methods of their choice for family planning and for the regulation of fertility and the right of access to health-care services that will enable women to progress safely through pregnancy and childbirth.

Call on countries to adopt gender sensitive policies and programmes to prevent the spread of STI and HIV/AIDS and increase the use of contraception.

### **Conclusion**

Call on countries to review their progress - assess their achievements, identify the challenges, constraints and opportunities, use local capacities and moral principles, learn from their experience and that of other nations and develop strategies for achieving these objectives, understanding cultural diversity and varied experience.

Urge our Parliaments, at this the mid-point of the ICPD' 20 year Programme of Action (PoA), to expand and accelerate their national efforts in relation to these programmes by building on their achievements and exploring further opportunities identified during this process of review.

While appreciating the efforts which have been made, call upon developed countries of the region to enhance their financial contribution for population, development and reproductive health related programmes, as balanced and affordable populations will be helpful in sustainable development together with reducing poverty, illegal immigration and situation conflicts.

Call upon developed countries to honour the financial commitments made at the 1994 ICPD and to develop cooperative mechanisms to ensure effective expenditure of funding.

Call upon developing countries to increase the national budget allocation for population and development, including reproductive health, related programmes and make effective use of overseas aid funding.

Urge the AFPPD to promote programs for the education of male parliamentarians on gender issues, population, development and reproductive health and rights.

Commit to work towards the enhancement of women's empowerment in our societies through parliamentary and civil action.