

2006 INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS' CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION

Bangkok, Thailand ♦ 21-22 November 2006

"We Parliamentarians pledge, as public advocates, legislators and policy makers, to carry out these actions and to systematically and actively monitor the progress we make in doing so. We further pledge to report regularly on this progress through parliamentary groups and to meet again in two years to assess the results we have made, both individually and collectively." **2002 Ottawa Statement of Commitment**

♦ CONFERENCE OUTLINE

I. Justification

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, the international community agreed to allocate an annual sum of \$18.5 billion by 2005 for population and reproductive health programmes in developing countries. Two thirds of the target would come from developing countries themselves and the remaining one third would come from external donor funding.

While both donors and developing countries are expected to achieve their 2005 targets as set out in the ICPD, there remain serious gaps in population funding which make it difficult for countries to provide the information, services and commodities needed to meet the ICPD goals by 2015.

First, recent research shows that the funding targets set a decade ago in Cairo were substantially underestimated for reproductive health and HIV/AIDS. One study estimates that the annual cost of meeting current needs for population activities is \$45.8 billion, which is much higher than the original 1994 estimates (\$18.5 billion). Based on these estimates, in 2005, donors will have allocated only one third of the needed funds, and developing countries only half.

Second, funding for reproductive health, especially family planning, has suffered significantly because of a shift of population assistance funds to HIV/AIDS. Funds for reproductive health and family planning are not keeping up with the needs of an increasing number of couples of reproductive ages in developing countries. On the other hand, funds needed to address AIDS remain inadequate in spite of recent, large increases in funding for STD/HIV/AIDS.

Third, while developing countries as a whole are making progress in providing domestic resources for their own population programmes, the poorest countries continue to depend entirely on external assistance. They will not be able to meet the needs of their populations unless donors increase their support.

Another important challenge for advancing the ICPD agenda is the creation and nurturing of an enabling environment in the domestic context, which can be realized through adopting and improving relevant laws, policies and programmes on population and development. Significant progress has been made in this area in the past decade. For example, 96% of the 151 countries that responded to UNFPA's global survey in 2003 reported action to integrate population concerns into development policies and strategies.

Yet many of the laws and policies, while improved, are still not where they should be. Also, the implementation of existing laws and policies remains a challenge in many countries. Today, more than 350 million couples still lack access to a full range of family planning services. Over half a million women die every year from treatable complications of pregnancy and delivery. Population growth in developing countries is still contributing, along with high resource consumption by affluent populations, to increasing stress on the global environment. It is obvious that much more needs to be done in the next ten years in order to meet all of the ICPD goals.

Whether or not we can fill the gaps in laws, policies and funding, and whether or not we can achieve the ICPD and the Millennium Development Goals by 2015, depends on the political will of governments in both developed and developing countries. Strong support of parliamentarians is critical to build this political will.

II. 2002 Ottawa and 2004 Strasbourg Conferences

It is against this background that the first International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI/ICPD) was held in Ottawa, Canada, from 21 to 22 November 2002. The conference, held at the Canadian Parliament, brought together 103 elected representatives from 72 countries and territories, along with secretariats of national, regional and global parliamentary groups, panelists and resource persons, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

The Ottawa conference also established, for the first time, a global system of regular monitoring and follow-up for parliamentarians. The conference was crafted to be the first in a series of conferences to be held every two years around the same themes, i.e. resource mobilization and creation of an enabling environment for population and development. The location of the conference would rotate between the Asia and the Pacific, the African, the Arab, the Inter-European and the Inter-American regions.

The second IPCI/ICPD was held on 18-19 October 2004, in Strasbourg, France under the auspices of the Council of Europe, which is Europe's oldest and most representative political institution. It attracted 119 elected representatives from 82 countries and territories, including ministers and speakers of parliaments from both developed and developing countries.

The two conferences generated tremendous results, with parliamentarians around the world making the Ottawa and Strasbourg Commitments a point of reference for their work in supporting the ICPD Programme of Action. Numerous parliamentary declarations and reports have been adopted at the national, regional and global levels in the past four years, which refer to or build on the two Commitments and their calls to action.

Since the Ottawa conference, UNFPA has served as the IPCI/ICPD secretariat responsible for monitoring progress and disseminating information to parliamentarians on a regular basis. It has set up and is running an email newsletter entitled Global Population Policy Update, which regularly reports on the progress made by parliamentarians and governments in fulfilling their commitments. The newsletter has served as a constant reminder that parliamentarians, governments and civil society are all working towards the common goal of realizing the ICPD agenda.

III. 2006 Bangkok Conference

The global and regional parliamentary groups that hosted the Ottawa and Strasbourg Conferences decided to convene the third IPCI/ICPD in Asia and the Pacific region. Bangkok was suggested as the venue of the third conference, as the city is not only where the host regional group (AFPPD) is located, but it is also one of the centers of the region.

The Bangkok conference will focus on taking stock of the progress made so far by parliamentarians in advancing the ICPD agenda and coming up with a common strategy to take their collective efforts to a next level. Bangkok would provide a perfect opportunity for such an exercise, as parliamentarians have the achievements of Ottawa and Strasbourg to build upon, as well as the ten-year review of the ICPD in 2004 and the World Summit in 2005. Through this exercise, parliamentarians would be able to chart the way

forward to achieving both the ICPD goals and the Millennium Development Goals by 2015.

The conference is expected to produce a forward-looking declaration that would build on the Ottawa Commitment and provide a clear sense of direction for the ten years to come.

PURPOSE

To promote dialogue among parliamentarians from all regions of the world on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, with a view to achieving further commitment to collective action in the areas of resource mobilization and creation of an enabling policy environment for population and development. Special focus will be placed on taking stock of the progress made since Ottawa and coming up with a strategy for future action.

HOSTS

The Parliament of Thailand in collaboration with the following parliamentary groups:

- ❖ Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD)
- ❖ Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (IEPPFD)
- ❖ Forum of African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAAPPD)
- ❖ Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (IAPG)
- ❖ Parliamentarians for Global Action (PGA)

ORGANIZERS

AFPPD, the Thai Senate Committee on Public Health, UNFPA and ESCAP

SPONSORS

AFPPD (with the support of the Japanese Trust Fund for Inter-Country NGOs Activities), UNFPA and others (t.b.d.)

DATE AND VENUE

21-22 November 2006 in Bangkok, Thailand at the United Nations Conference Center.

AGENDA

Attached. Official interpretation in English, French, Spanish, Russian and Arabic will be offered.

PARTICIPANTS

Approximately 250 participants are expected to attend the conference, including:

- ❖ Over 130 parliamentarians from all regions of the world
- ❖ Representatives from the national, regional and global parliamentary groups

- ❖ Panelists and resource persons (including ministers from donor and developing countries)
- ❖ UNFPA and IPPF
- ❖ Representatives of ESCAP

COST OF PARTICIPATION

For parliamentarians and other invited guests, the cost of travel and other necessary expenses will be covered from the conference budget. Observers are asked to pay for their own travel costs.

STEERING COMMITTEE

A steering committee consisting of two parliamentarians each from AFPPD, IEPFPD, FAAPPD, IAPG and PGA has been established to

prepare for the conference. It held its first meeting on 17 October 2005 in Tokyo.

EXPECTED OUTCOME

- ❖ A Statement of Commitment that will spell out concrete actions to be taken by parliamentarians to further mobilize resources and create an enabling environment for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.
- ❖ Expansion the IPCI/ICPD network of parliamentarians and cultivation of champion parliamentarians in every participating country and region for achieving both the ICPD agenda and the MDGs by 2015.