

PLAN OF ACTION

Preamble

The 4th Asian-Pacific Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference on "gender responsive governance – the key to the population and development agenda" held in Wellington, New Zealand, from 10-12 June 2006, reaffirms the principles and recommendations of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action, the 1995 Beijing Platform for Action, the Millennium Development Goals and, more recently, the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document and to the 2006 review of the UNGASS Declaration on HIV/AIDS to which our countries have committed.

Recognising the cultural, religious, social and economic diversity of our unique region, but also our shared commitment to the elimination of poverty and the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals, and the need for political will and leadership, we, the parliamentarians and ministers from 30 countries in Asia and the Pacific, call on all parliamentarians in our region to:

Commit to our responsibility as representatives of the people to show leadership and build strong and strategic partnerships, including those with NGOs and civil society, and parliamentarians across the region.

Recognise the right to health, and that women and girls in the region bear a disproportionate burden of many of the region's health and development issues, including the increasing impact in the region of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, maternal mortality, child marriage and lack of equitable access to education, social and economic development initiatives.

Recognise that the inclusion of women at all levels of governance is key to addressing these issues and to equality, sustainable and equitable development, and peace and security for all.

Recognise that the role of women is essential in decision-making at all levels of society, as is their ability to make decisions about their individual lives, and in particular their sexual and reproductive health, in order to enable them to make real changes in their lives and the lives of future generations.

Recognise the importance of educating and encouraging men to be aware of issues of power imbalances between men and women at all levels of decision making, and also recognise that men's support for women's participation in governance and decision making is essential at all levels for individual and national development.

Recognise that epidemic levels of violence against women impact on every aspect of their lives and those of their children, and this must be urgently addressed at both the national and individual level, and in partnership with men.

Recognise that governance at national and local levels should address the many barriers to women's health, wellbeing and full participation in society, both within the family and more widely, and should consequently consider the gender impact of all policies and strategies on both women and men, and on the issues critically important to this region.

Recognise that culture, history and tradition and gender roles shape our lives and may support or inhibit women's empowerment, noting that social and economic empowerment of women

does not mean disempowerment of men, but that both are strong – different but equal - and able to participate.

Commitment

Being profoundly concerned by these issues, and building on the resolutions/discussions of the three previous AFPPD conferences for women parliamentarians, we commit individually, and collectively, to report back to our parliamentary colleagues on the issues of this meeting, and to raise awareness and show leadership of women's issues, including the need for increased gender responsiveness in our countries by advocating for the development and resourcing of evidence-based strategies and governance, through strategies such as:

- **Improved access to current sex-disaggregated data and research related to women.**
- **Setting of benchmarks by which progress can be measured, including MDG indicators and targets.**
- **Use of gender analysis in planning of policies, legislation and budgets, and adequate resourcing of strategies to improve women's health, safety and wellbeing, education and development.**
- **Development of specific cross-government women's action plans in order to maximise women's social and economic participation.**
- **Increased opportunities for leadership and representation of women on decision-making bodies in government, business and the community.**
- **Paying significant attention to the needs and participation of rural women.**
- **Involving young people in education on sexual and reproductive health, social and economic participation and decision-making, and in supporting young women in political and public life.**
- **Developing a women's parliamentary caucus, or strengthening its role where they already exist.**
- **Developing a resourced cross party parliamentarians' group for population and development to initiate change and monitor progress wherever they do not exist**
- **Implementing comprehensive health, education and information strategies related to sexual and reproductive health, including HIV/AIDS, and other issues such as drug use, in order to promote health, wellbeing and self-esteem.**
- **Implementation of the UN convention and protocols and anti-trafficking laws, including strengthening regional cooperation, particularly in relation to repatriation and rehabilitation of victims.**
- **Proactive policies to prevent sex selection, child marriage, human trafficking, fake marriage and forced labour.**
- **Ensuring donor country decisions are informed by the commitments in this plan of action, and by the views of women in the parliaments of recipient countries, and are harmonised and coordinated to ensure fair and equitable delivery of aid.**
- **Analysis of the impact of globalisation on women, in particular international trade rules and policy.**

We also call upon AFPPD to support us in this work through:

- Collection and distribution of research, data and practical tools related to women's health, wellbeing and participation in governance.
- Development of a political mentoring scheme for women in governance.
- Continued support for women parliamentarians and continuation of parliamentarians' groups for population and development.