

All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development

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POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) was held in 1994 in Cairo. The Program of Action adopted at the ICPD represented a major advance in international thinking on population issues. Population growth was recognised as a global concern and one that cannot be considered in isolation from social and economic conditions, particularly those which limit the power of women to control their own lives. Thus the ICPD affirmed that population, social development and sustainable development are inextricably linked. Through the ICPD Program of Action the world community made commitments to meeting the challenges of population and development in the areas of environmental sustainability, social justice, gender equity, education, health, reproductive rights and family planning, international migration and development cooperation.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

📖 *Program of Action adopted at the ICPD*, UN, 1994,
<http://www.un.org/popin/icpd2.htm>

📖 *Australia and the ICPD*, Commonwealth of Australia, 1995

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Dianne Proctor from the Secretariat is available every Wednesday during sitting weeks in the office of Kelly Hoare MP (RG 21) to assist members of the group on issues concerning sexual and reproductive health and population and development.



ABOUT THE GROUP

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (APPGPD) was formed to forward Australia's commitment to the aims of the 1994 Cairo Programme of Action, by providing a forum for discussion by MPs and Senators on population, development and reproductive health issues. The group organises seminars for both Parliamentarians and others to hear prominent experts on these issues; facilitates study tours to developing countries to improve understanding on family planning and reproductive health programs and projects, and participates in national, international and UN conferences on population, development, reproductive health and related issues. The secretariat for the group provides briefings on population and family planning for group members.

There are currently 85 members of the group, including 39 members of state and territory parliaments. In addition to its work at the national and state/territory level, the group is also actively involved in the work of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (see page 4).

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONS

All parliamentarians who support the aims and objectives of the APPGPD are eligible to become members. Membership forms are available from the Secretariat, or can be downloaded: www.arha.org.au and follow the "Parliamentary" link.

2003 STUDY TOUR TO THE PHILIPPINES

The Australian Reproductive Health Alliance will be running a study tour to the Philippines in July 2003 for 9 parliamentarians. Of these, two will be from the Pacific and seven from Australia. Participants will tour both urban and rural projects that focus on reproductive health, and will also look at agricultural and environmental programs.

For further information, contact the Secretariat.

The All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development is grateful to the Hewlett Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation and the Packard Foundation.

ADVOCACY AND EVENTS

US WITHDRAWAL OF FUNDING TO UNFPA

In June 2002 US President George W Bush froze \$US34 million in funding to UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund), funds which had previously been approved by Congress. This was due to pressure from anti-abortionists, who alleged that the funds were going to coercive abortion-related activities in China. The UNFPA is not involved in any abortion-related activities anywhere and a report from a US government delegation to China confirmed this.

The UNFPA has gone to extraordinary lengths to satisfy various US administrations - over the past decade, UNFPA took the highly unusual step, at the request of the United States, of segregating the US contribution and providing accounting information that irrefutably demonstrated that no US taxpayer funds were used in China.

The UNFPA is funded by contributions from donor governments, not out of UN general funds. The US withdrawal resulted in a 5-10 percent reduction in UNFPA's available funds for programs in developing countries, particularly funding available for some of the poorest countries in Africa. Executive Director of the UNFPA, Thoraya Obaid, said in a statement *"In concrete terms, we estimate that \$34 million for reproductive health and family planning would be enough to prevent: 2 million unwanted pregnancies; nearly 800,000 induced abortions; 4,700 maternal deaths; nearly 60,000 cases of serious maternal illness; and over 77,000 infant and child deaths."* (22 July 2002)

The APPGPD joined an international campaign in support of the UNFPA. Various parliamentary organisations, including the Inter European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and Parliamentarians for Global Action, wrote to the President. The APPGPD also wrote to President Bush, urging him to release the funds. An excerpt from the letter follows:

"As events of September 11, 2001 showed the connectedness of the world in the face of an international crisis, the Australian All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development believes that it also showed that actions and decisions in one country do have a tremendous impact across the globe. The decision to block funding to the UNFPA will also have repercussions around the world. Projects to combat HIV/AIDS will close, clinics providing ante and postnatal care are already shutting and more women and children will die and more people will contract the HIV/AIDS virus. In company with other Parliamentary Groups from around the world who have written to you on this matter, we wish to express our concern and ask that you provide the full \$34 million in funding that your own Congress has appropriated for UNFPA without further delay." (14/3/2002)

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

- Background: www.planetwire.org/details/2979
- UNFPA: www.unfpa.org/
- APPGPD letter: www.arha.org.au/parliamentary.htm

VISIT OF DIRECTOR-GENERAL OF INTERNATIONAL PLANNED PARENTHOOD FEDERATION (IPPF)

The International Planned Parenthood Federation works through autonomous Family Planning Associations (FPAs) in over 180 countries to provide family planning and sexual and reproductive health services. The APPGPD had the opportunity to meet the new Director-General of IPPF, Dr Steve Sinding, during his visit to Australia in December 2002. Members of the Group discussed issues surrounding sexual and reproductive health both within Australia and the region. It was noted that parliamentarians do not always have ready access to information on these issues. Strategies by which organisations such as non-government family planning agencies can provide clear and timely information were discussed.

Accompanying Dr Sinding were Roberto Rojas-Morales, Executive Director of Sexual Health & Family Planning Australia and representatives from Family Planning Associations in NSW and Western Australia.

ADDRESS BY CHIEF SCIENTIST ON SUSTAINABILITY

In September 2002 the APPGPD hosted a dinner function for all parliamentarians, to promote debate on the topic of sustainability. The Chief Scientist, Dr Robin Batterham, spoke about the relationship between the economy, the environment and society. He covered the issues of an ageing population, our consumption patterns and urged those attending to embrace an optimistic view of the future, whether when talking about the ageing of the population or the impact of population growth on the environment. In particular, he outlined some of the new technologies that are assisting in tackling the greenhouse problem, and alternative energy sources.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

- "Sustainability can be a vexatious subject", address by Dr Robin Batterham to the APPGPD, available from www.arha.org.au/parliamentary.htm

SPEECHES BY APPGPD MEMBERS

Members of the APPGPD have continued to advocate around the issues of population, development and reproductive rights through parliamentary debate. Below are some extracts from those speeches.

Kelly Hoare MP, Member for Charlton, and APPGPD Representative to the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, 16/09/2002:

"Women, the elderly and children are disproportionately in the numbers of those who are adversely affected by water and health issues. Women have a crucial role in development and progress. Women in developing nations must be supported, in line with the recommendations of the 1994 ICPD program of action. That support will enhance women's choices about their reproduction, their reproductive health, their education and the education of their children, their economic participation and their management of resources."

Margaret May MP, Member for McPherson, 17/06/2002:

"It was very clear from the [20th Anniversary Asian Population and Development Association International Forum] that water is the key to economic development, which in turn will overcome poverty... Access to water and sanitation is a necessary precursor to other forms of development, but it will become a major limiting factor in socioeconomic development unless we take action now. As we work towards sustainable development—that is, development where people's needs are met and their quality of life is improved in the present while safeguarding the ability of future generations to meet their own needs—we have to secure the political will and leadership to act innovatively and decisively. I cannot stress enough that our role as parliamentarians is crucial. We are talking about the future of mankind as we know it today."

Senator Marise Payne, Secretary of the APPGPD, 13/3/2002:

"I am hopeful that there will be a focus in this parliamentary term on population policy issues in Australia... While the national media attention is welcome, for the most part it has glossed over the finer detail of issues, including, some would say, the state of the environment. That has been a disappointment of the coverage. The link between population and environment is extraordinarily complex and deserves deep consideration... While the environment must be a factor in population forecasting, other considerations will also prevail. The effect that population growth has on our economy, the effects of the mix of our refugee, family reunion, skilled migration and general migration streams have on the economy, the issues of internal distribution of our population and international relations are the key issues that should be top of mind in Australia's population debate."

LAUNCH OF WORKSHOP RESOURCE KIT ON POPULATION, THE ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT

On 11 November 2002 Ann Corcoran MP, Member for Isaacs and Vice-Chair of the APPGPD, officially launched the "Common Ground Manual", an innovative project to tackle the issues of population, the environment and development in an interconnected way. This resource kit was developed by three agencies: the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance, Sexual Health and Family Planning Australia and the Cairns and Far North Queensland Environment Centre.

The kit was developed for a series of national workshops which brought together an unusual alliance of groups to address the issues of population, environment and development. The workshops, which have been held in all state capitals and some regional centres with resounding success, brought together environmentalists and reproductive health workers and advocates - groups that previously had not realised the links between the issues for which they advocate.

The launch was attended by members of the APPGPD and members of the three agencies who developed the project. This project was made possible through the assistance of the Asia-Pacific Alliance for the ICPD and the Packard Foundation.

APPGPD LAUNCHES UNFPA STATE OF WORLD POPULATION REPORT

Each year the APPGPD is involved in launching the UNFPA's State of World Population Report in Australia. In December 2002, Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, Chair of the APPGPD, launched the 2002 Report at a seminar at Parliament House.

Dr Nelson spoke about the importance of a report such as this, highlighting how issues such as the global HIV epidemic are linked with broader problems of poverty and over-population. Catherine Shelvin Pierce, UNFPA Regional Representative for the Pacific, and Ian Howie, Director of Human Resources for the UNFPA, also spoke about the way in which poverty impacts on human populations.

They also discussed strategies for alleviating poverty, emphasising that a relatively small amount of resources can go a long way toward poverty reduction in developing countries.



Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, Chair of APPGPD, launches UNFPA State of World Population Report 2002

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

- ☞ The report is available online: www.unfpa.org/swp
- ☞ For a hard copy, please contact the APPGPD Secretariat: Rachel@arha.org.au or 02 62874422

ASIAN FORUM OF PARLIAMENTARIANS ON POPULATION AND DEVELOPMENT

KELLY HOARE MP HEADS WOMEN'S COMMITTEE

Kelly Hoare MP, Member for Charlton, represented the APPGPD at the 7th Annual Congress of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), held in Beijing 16-17 October 2002.

The 7th General Assembly coincided with the 20th anniversary of the commencement of the Forum, and reviewed the achievements of the past 20 years and the development of the Forum. Many founding members, the majority of them now retired, came from all over the world to commemorate the Asian Forum's twenty years of useful work. More than one hundred and eighty parliamentarians from twenty-eight countries from the Asia Pacific and Central Asian republics of the former USSR attended the General Assembly. Representatives from many UN and other international agencies were also present.

At the General Assembly, Kelly was elected by her parliamentary peers as Chair of the Standing Committee on Women, and to the Executive.

Kelly has a longstanding commitment to international population and development issues and is a strong advocate on women's issues. Her election is a great honour for her personally and for the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development.

ABOUT THE ASIAN FORUM

The AFPPD, formed in 1981 in Beijing is a platform of national committees of parliamentarians on population and development working to generate support, and perpetuate cooperation among Asian parliamentarians in all areas related to population and development. In conjunction with other parliamentary organisations, UN agencies and other international bodies, AFPPD conducts seminars, conferences, and study visits in order to help parliamentarians to increase their level of knowledge, involvement and motivation on issues such as population and its relationship with reproductive health, family planning, HIV AIDS, poverty, food security, water resources, environment, sustainable development, ageing, urbanisation, migration, the status of women and gender equality. These activities aim to create a greater awareness amongst parliamentarians of the role they can play in helping to solve problems related to overpopulation and underdevelopment. AFPPD currently has twenty member countries including Australia.



Kelly Hoare MP, Margaret May MP, Dianne Proctor (Secretary), 18th Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development, Tokyo, March 2002

FURTHER INFORMATION AND RESOURCES:

 www.afppd.org

 Beijing meetings: http://www.afppd.org/Sept_Oct_02/issue_sept_oct_02.htm

AUSTRALIAN MPs PARTICIPATE IN ASIAN MEETINGS

Kelly Hoare MP, Member for Charlton and APPGPD Representative to the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, and Margaret May MP, Member for McPherson, and a member of APPGPD, attended the 20th Anniversary Asian Population and Development Association International Forum and 18th Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development in Tokyo in March 2002. The meetings focussed on water and sanitation, regional development and population.

The international forum focused on conditions for human survival and the future of our international society. Issues discussed included the environment, biology, food, public health, social structures, bioethics and water. There were also discussions on population increase.

The parliamentarians' meeting, held over two days, focused on water, sanitation, regional development and population. Participants were addressed by representatives from the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), the Global Water Commission, Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), the Water and Natural Resources Section of the Economic and Social Commission for the Asia Pacific (ESCAP) and academics specialising in female literacy, water-related health issues, and development. Parliamentarians also spoke on their role in water management. They all shared the opinion that the need to educate people in their respective countries on the seriousness of water scarcity and water pollution was imperative, as is working with local government to ensure better water management.