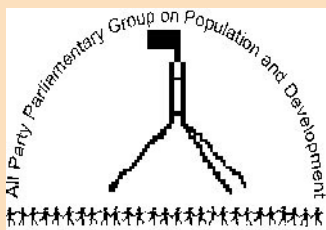


# Australian All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development



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## About the Group

The Australian All Party Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (APPGPD) was formed in 1995 to support and promote the Program of Action from the International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994.

The Group was initially co-convened by Senator Margaret Reynolds, Senator Vicki Bourne and Dr Brendan Nelson MP. In 1998 a new constitution for the Group allowed members of state/territory parliaments to join as Corresponding Members. Under the new rules, Dr Brendan Nelson MP was elected to Chair the Group in 1999, continuing in this position until 2003 when he resigned due to his ministerial workload. Michael Johnson MP was elected as Chair at a general meeting of the Group in 2004.

The Group has contributed to raising awareness in Australian parliaments about international population and development issues. The Group has hosted meetings and

seminars with leaders in the field, including Senator Mechai Viravaidya, founder of the Population and Community Development Association in Thailand, Dr Steve Sinding, Director-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation and senior representatives from the Population Council, UN Population Fund, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, and the UK Parliamentary Group on Population and Development.

Members of the Group have participated in three study tours, to Thailand/Vietnam, Vanuatu/Fiji, and the Philippines.

The Group also hosted the Conference "Health for All into the 21st Century" in 1999, events for the Day of 6 Billion, and each year launches the UN Population Fund's *State of World Population Report*.

Members of the Group have raised population and development issues in Parliament through motions, adjournment debates and questions on notice.

## Launch of UNFPA State of World Population Report 2003

Each year members of the APPGPD actively participate in the official launch in Australia of the UNFPA *State of World Population Report*. The 2003 report, titled *Making 1 billion count: investing in adolescents' health and rights*, was launched at a lunchtime function at Parliament House by Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, Chair of APPGPD. Ian Howie, Chief of Human Resources at UNFPA also spoke at the launch. To mark the launch of the report, the Australian Reproductive Health Alliance ran a writing competition for students based on the theme of the report. The competition winner, Prue Plummer from the Gold Coast, read out her composition at the launch.

The report examines the challenges and risks faced by largest generation of adolescents in history – 1.2 strong – as they enter their reproductive years. An estimated 238 million youth – almost one in four – face the constraints of extreme poverty. The

additional risks young women face include social expectations to marry and begin bearing children before they are ready. For young women aged 15 to 19, complications of pregnancy and childbirth, in particular unsafe

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*Chair of the APPGPD until 2004, Hon Dr Brendan Nelson MP, with Margaret May MP (Member for McPherson) with the winner of the writing competition, Prue Plummer and her father Terry*

# Study Tour to the Philippines

In July a group of nine parliamentarians from Australia, Tonga, Kiribati and PNG participated in a study tour to the Philippines. The participants were Michael Johnson MP (Member for Ryan), Kelly Hoare MP (Member for Charlton), Harry Quick MP (Member for Franklin), John Hyde MLA (WA Member for Perth), Hon Sandra Kanck MLC (SA Parliamentary Leader of the Democrats), Bernie Masters MLA (WA Member for Vasse), Fineasi Funaki MP (Parliament of Tonga), Hon Etera Teangana MP (Speaker of the House, Parliament of Kiribati) and Hon Lady Carol Kidu MP (PNG Minister for Social Welfare).



*Field visit to Malabon City, Manila*

The study tour provided the parliamentarians with the opportunity to observe first hand both government and NGO programs working in the field of family planning and reproductive health. It also gave participants the opportunity to make closer links with the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development, which is the national body in the Philippines represented at the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development.

The three parliamentarians from Pacific Island

*Kelly Hoare MP at tree-planting day, Sibunag Elementary School, Guimaras Island*



countries who were also invited to participate in the tour gained an insight into reproductive health initiatives in another developing country. It also provided them with the opportunity to observe the workings of both PLPCD and APPGPD, which will assist the fledgling Pacific Parliamentary Association on Population and Development.

The Philippines has a high fertility rate and as a result one of the highest population growth rates in

Asia, at 2.36%. The population is currently 78.6 million and an estimated one third of households lives below the poverty line. The Philippine population is young; two out of five Filipinos are aged less than fifteen years, while almost 22 million Filipinos are aged between 10 to 24 years. The implications of sustaining such a youthful population pose many immediate problems for Philippine governance, and issues pertaining to young people in particular are at the forefront of sexual and reproductive health advocacy efforts.

The group visited Manila and the provinces of Leyte, Cebu, Iloilo and Guimaras Island, meeting with staff from a range of NGOs and government clinics, as well as local government officials, Mayors, Senators and Congressmen. Among the many field visits were a government hospital, fishing communities addressing population and environment issues through local planning, an organisation providing outreach services to sex workers, an organisation running after school education programs, and an antenatal clinic set up by an NGO in a Manila slum area.

On return to Australia the three federal parliamentarians who had participated in the tour hosted a dinner at Parliament House attended by parliamentarians, AusAID staff and the Philippine Ambassador, where they spoke on their impressions from the tour.

*"Personally, I am pleased to see how the Philippines, particularly at the local level, is addressing the serious challenges in population growth and the development issues that it confronts." (Michael Johnson MP, Member for Ryan, Tour delegation leader, in speech to parliament 19 August 2003)*

 The final report from the tour is available from <http://www.arha.org.au/parliamentary.htm> or the secretariat.

*Tour members Bernie Masters MLA (WA), Kelly Hoare MP, Michael Johnson MP, John Hyde MLA (WA) with members of Philippines Legislators' Committee on Population and Development*



# Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development

## Inter-Country Parliamentarians' Workshop "The Challenge of HIV/AIDS: a Special Focus on Preventive Vaccines"

Harry Quick MP (Member for Franklin) and John Hyde MLA (WA State Member for Perth) attended this workshop in Bangkok in October 2003 together with some forty parliamentarians from over 12 countries. The workshop was organised by AFPPD in cooperation with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI).

Topics covered in the workshop included an overview of HIV/AIDS in Asia, information on vaccine research, development and clinical trial process, experiences and key priorities from ongoing experiences, a comprehensive approach towards ending the epidemic (prevention, treatment and vaccines), and the global responsibility for vaccine development and access. The workshop also included group discussions on access and research, resulting in a call for action being adopted.

The workshop was addressed by researchers and officials from UNAIDS, Ministry of Health (Thailand), International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, and the Thai Red Cross AIDS Research Center.

For other health epidemics such as tuberculosis and polio, vaccines have proven to be the cheapest and most effective form of public health intervention. Given the enormity of the HIV epidemic in some countries, an effective vaccine is possibly the only means by which progression of the disease will be halted in the longer term.

There is not currently an effective vaccine for HIV or AIDS. There are currently 28 HIV/AIDS vaccine trials being conducted internationally. Collectively, this involves testing of 24 different vaccines.

The trials are run in three phases, with each phase involving a greater number of volunteers (people taking the vaccine). The trial process takes up to five years or more. The majority of trials are still in phase one. Only two trials have been taken to phase three, both conducted by

the American VaxGen company. The first of these trials, carried out in North America, proved unsuccessful. Unfortunately VaxGen announced on 12 November 2003 that the preliminary results from their second phase three trial, being held in Thailand, did not show the vaccine (AIDSVAX B/E) to be effective in either preventing primary HIV infection or slowing the progress of the disease in infected individuals.

The International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) estimates that just over US\$430 - \$470 million is currently invested worldwide in vaccine research and development (other estimates are slightly higher). Of this, US\$350-360 million has been invested by governments, US\$30-40 million by multilateral and non-government organisations and US \$50-70 million from private industry.

Pharmaceutical companies Merck and Co, GlaxoSmithKline and VaxGen Inc. are among those who have vaccine research programs in place and have pushed human trials. The US National Institutes of Health are funding trials, including one currently being carried out in Australia. IAVI also fund trials.

The greatest demand for HIV vaccines is in developing countries which are least able to pay. Therefore private industry has been reluctant to become involved in vaccine research and development. It is likely that governments will need to supply a significant proportion of funding for vaccine research.

As follow up to the workshop, Harry Quick put several questions on notice regarding Australia's commitments to vaccine research and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, and our official participation in the upcoming XV International AIDS Conference being held in Bangkok in July.

## HIV/AIDS Workshop and AFPPD Executive Committee Meeting in New Delhi

Kelly Hoare MP, Member for Charlton and Australia's Representative to AFPPD attended the International Conference of South Asian Parliamentarians on HIV/AIDS in New Delhi in August. This seminar, organised by the Indian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD) in cooperation with AFPPD and UNFPA, addressed the advocacy role parliamentarians can play in HIV/AIDS prevention. The meeting aimed to develop strong leadership among South Asian nations, and to promote advocacy with respective governments for the allocation of adequate funds for HIV programs. The seminar was attended by parliamentarians from all South Asian countries as well as Australia and some South-East Asian and Pacific nations.



*Kelly Hoare MP, APPGPD representative to AFPPD and Chair of the AFPPD Women's Standing Committee*

## Asian Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference on Empowerment of Women

The Asian Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference on Empowerment of Women was held in Manila in October 2003. Kelly Hoare MP, Member for Charlton, attended in her capacity as Chair of the AFPPD Standing Committee on Women.

The conference was organised by the sister organisation of APPGPD, the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development, in cooperation with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) and the

government of Japan. The conference brought together more than 100 participants, including 40 parliamentarians and 10 ministers from 17 countries. The theme of the meeting was "Empowered Women: Breaking the chains of Poverty and Gender Inequality".

 **The Manila Declaration on Women Empowerment, Population and Development was adopted at the meeting. A copy of the Declaration is available from <http://www.arha.org.au/parliamentary.htm>**

## 19<sup>th</sup> Asian Parliamentarians meeting on Population and Development

In December 2003 Hon Dr Meredith Burgmann MLC, President of the NSW Legislative Council, represented the APPGPD at the 19<sup>th</sup> Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population and Development in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

The meeting had the theme of water and population, with participants hearing from a range of representatives from international organisations and international experts

on water, food security, public health and population. Speakers noted that a number of international conventions have explicitly recognised access to water as a basic human right. Through ratification of these conventions and international instruments, governments have committed themselves to ensure availability of a minimum amount of



*Hon Dr Meredith Burgmann MLC, President of NSW Legislative Council at the 19<sup>th</sup> APDA meeting*

clean water to their people. It was stressed that it is in this respect that parliamentarians can play a crucial role, by lobbying with their respective governments to follow an integrated approach to managing water, the land and the eco-system. Environmental considerations as well as population and gender perspectives must also be taken into account. Speakers warned that unless the ICPD goals are met, the challenges of balancing people's demands with limited, environmental resources, especially water, will be overwhelming.

Over the past three years, APDA has focused a lot on water issues and the linkages with population. The Ho Chi Minh City Declaration, the fruit of three years discussion on water and population, was adopted at the 19<sup>th</sup> APDA meeting. It advocates a holistic approach to population and water.

 **The Ho Chi Minh City declaration is available from <http://www.arha.org.au/parliamentary.htm>**

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abortion and obstructed labour, are a leading cause of death. HIV/AIDS is a disease of young people, with youth (increasingly young women) accounting for nearly half of new cases of HIV infection worldwide. In addition, more than 13 million children under age 15 have lost one or both parents to AIDS. Many take on the care of younger siblings or live on the streets. The report also highlights some of the many good programs for youth being run around the world that aim to keep young women in school, provide youth-friendly health services, provide life skills and training and raise awareness among community leaders of the reproductive health needs of adolescents. The report warns that the costs of failing to support young people will have serious consequences at both the individual and societal levels. These consequences range from premature deaths, higher rates of sexually transmitted infection and unwanted pregnancies to slower economic growth, civil unrest and the reinforcement of gender disparities.

 **The State of World Population Report 2003 is available from <http://www.unfpa.org> or in hard copy from the secretariat**

## Asian Women Parliamentarians' and Ministers' Conference Australia, 2004

APPGPD will be hosting this year's conference, which will be held in Canberra 27-28 July 2004. This is a major event for the Group this year, particularly as it is the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development. This conference is supported by the AFPPD.

Further information on the conference is available from the Secretariat or Kelly Hoare MP, who is Chair of the AFPPD Standing Committee on Women.