



## Twentieth Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development

**28-29 September 2004**

### **Almaty, Kazakhstan**

NZPPD member Martin Gallagher recently attended the Twentieth Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development in Almaty, Kazakhstan (28-29 September 2004). Around 40 parliamentarians from the Asia and Pacific countries attended the meeting, organized by the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) in collaboration with the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD).

The participants, who included parliamentarians, representatives from UNFPA and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and experts, discussed at length the issues of population and development.

At the conclusion of the meeting, the parliamentarians present adopted the following Declaration, which reaffirms their full commitment to the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and calls for governments to allocate the necessary resources for the implementation of population and development activities.

### **Almaty Declaration On Population and Development**

**Adopted at the Twentieth Asian Parliamentarians Meeting on Population  
and Development  
Alatau Health resort, Almaty, Kazakhstan**

**29 September, 2004**

### **Preamble**

We, the Parliamentarians from the Asia/Pacific countries meeting in Almaty, Kazakhstan, on 28-29 September, 2004, at the Twentieth Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development, to discuss the issues of population and development, issue the following declaration:

We reaffirm our commitment to work for achieving the aims and goals of the Cairo Declaration of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and its Programme of Action (POA). We reaffirm that without addressing the interrelationships between population and sustainable development (including environment, food /water security and health care), we will not be able to meet the regional population and development challenges.

Our countries have rich heritage and are different in many respects. To achieve sustainable development, while we have to respect the differences in terms of social changes and gender view in different area, it is essential in all our countries to have a long-term perspective on population and development, including reproductive health/rights, gender, combat violence against women and children, food/water security, environment, adolescent, youth and elderly, at the sub-regional level. These perspectives need to be adapted to each specific national situation.

We, the Parliamentarians of Asia/Pacific countries, urge our governments to develop long-term strategies to address the population and sustainable development issues in the Asian and the Pacific region, and fully support their timely implementation. We also urge mutual assistance between us in such a critical task.

Our countries have very different situations in terms of population and development. Some countries are facing problems of fewer children and aging population and others are on the path of demographic transition and enjoying their population bonus. And some of the countries are still facing rapid population growth. Some of the CIS countries have faced a very challenging past because of the economic transition to the market economy.

Issues:

**Demographic Structure:** Each country has its own population dynamics and needs to address this in relation to its development. In some countries, the major challenge is to reduce fertility rate, whereas in others, fertility rate has already decreased and efforts are focused on reducing the mortality rate. Migration is also an important issue for some countries; it needs to be better understood and taken into account in sub-national development strategies. In countries where fertility rates have been decreasing, aging is an increasingly important issue to address. Given the rapidly evolving economic context in the Asia/Pacific countries, it is necessary to develop long-term perspectives and strategies to address adequately the population and development balance.

**Reproductive Health:** Concerted efforts are needed to ensure access to quality reproductive health information, counselling and services. In times of transition or economic difficulties, the most disadvantaged populations are often those suffering the most. Attention needs to be given to ensuring that services are provided to all, so that each individual can exercise her or his reproductive rights, including the poor, the minorities, and the adolescents. As a prospective mother, girl's health needs special attention and care. The youth of today represents our future, and we need to give them the tools to have a healthy and productive life. Urgent attention is needed to ensure that the specific needs of adolescents are addressed. In many countries, improvement of the quality of reproductive and child health would reduce significantly the high rates of maternal and infant mortality as well as the high prevalence of abortions and of sexually transmitted infections thus improving the quality of life of our populations.

**STI/HIV/AIDS:** Of great concern is the rapid spread of STI/HIV/AIDS in our region, the potential terrible consequences on the very fabric of our populations and societies, and the costs associated with inadequate prevention. Concern is also raised for non availability and non affordability of medicine. Our countries

are experiencing different stages of the pandemic, but we all agree on the crucial importance of acting now in preventing further spread of the infection, in particular among the youth.

**Gender:** The transition and recent economic development have exacerbated some gender inequalities or have stimulated the emergence of new issues with regards to gender equity. Equal access to education and work, elimination of violence against women are among the priority issues in this area.

**Sustainable Development:** We recognize that Asia/Pacific has diverse and rich natural resources; however, they might be facing their limit of capacity, given the too often unsustainable manner in which we have been using our resources. Development strategies need to include proper use of resources, and an analysis of the implications of our developmental activities on the environment. We recognize the importance of maintaining our traditional food production and food supply systems. Equally important is the provision of appropriate storage and distribution systems. We strongly believe that food / water security is imperative for peace and stability.

**Quality of population:** Every person has a right to lead a happy life. We have to consider all aspects of life and address each individual's life long health, qualified life to promote overall population quality.

**Call to Action:**

We Parliamentarians here in Almaty, commit ourselves to the following actions and call on Parliamentarians in Asia and the Pacific to follow suit:

Make and encourage more efforts to link population and development, and to increase access and improve the quality of reproductive health services.

- Urge our respective governments and other partners in development to work together in developing and implementing comprehensive long-term strategies to address population and development issues, including reproductive health.
- Promote and monitor equal access to quality reproductive health services for all including adolescents.
- Encourage all partners in development, at all levels, to act immediately, in a coordinated and concerted effort, to prevent the further spread of STI/HIV/AIDS, giving very special attention to adolescents and young people.
- To promote better understanding of the gender dynamics and to promote concerted interventions to ensure full participation in and equal access to the benefit of development for both women and men. We need to monitor the situation and the trends, and encourage our respective governments to take the necessary actions, including the establishment of a positive legal environment.
- Urge the international community to ensure that the international trade be fully consistent with the long-term perspective of population and sustainable development, especially food security issues.
- We call on our governments to allocate the necessary resources for the implementation of the population and development activities.

**Commitment**

We, the parliamentarians commit ourselves to advocate and ensure implementation of the above actions at the grass-roots level, with our constituencies, and at the highest political level in our countries. Concerted efforts should be made, at all levels and with all partners, including the international communities, the NGOs and the communities themselves, in implementing the necessary actions.

We, the Parliamentarians believe in peace and respect of human rights, including reproductive rights. It is only in such environment that development can take place. We urge all the governments to adhere to all the international conventions promoting respect of human rights and peace, and to resolve problems in a peaceful manner. Together, we should aim at providing a peaceful life and security to all human beings.