



The New Zealand All-Party Parliamentary Group

19th January 2008

Dear friends,

I am writing to you in my role as Chair of the New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development (NZPPD).

It is my great pleasure to be joining you in participating in this important event: the 16th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF). I am looking forward to lively and constructive discussions with you all over the coming days. I have attached a briefing on behalf of NZPPD that you may find useful throughout this meeting.

This briefing outlines how population and development lie at the core of addressing many of the focus areas of the Asia - Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF). We also share with you how New Zealand Parliamentarians have addressed the importance of population and development and some ideas on how Parliamentarians can play a role in addressing population and development, both generally and here at the APPF.

The NZPPD provides a forum for New Zealand Parliamentarians to engage and act on international population and development issues. The NZPPD is a cross party group and is an active part of Parliamentary life in New Zealand.

Our parliamentary group was established to further the achievement of the 20 Year Programme of Action developed at the groundbreaking International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in 1994. The NZPPD aims to create a supportive environment nationally and internationally for implementation of the ICPD.

The NZPPD greatly values its relationships with other Parliamentarians regionally and internationally. Cooperation is vital in facing the shared challenges we face. The time for us to act is now. I hope you find this briefing interesting and useful to your work. I look forward to talking with you over the coming days.

Yours sincerely



Jill Pettis MP
NZPPD Chair

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Cover photograph: Steven Nowakowski, Asia Pacific Alliance (APA), 2006

Are you interested to know more?

If you have any questions in relation to anything you read in this briefing or would like to know more, you can contact the NZPPD Secretariat at the details below.

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**NZPPD Briefing
16th Annual Meeting of the Asia-Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF).**

1. Introduction

This briefing outlines how population and development lie at the core of addressing many of the focus areas of the Asia - Pacific Parliamentary Forum (APPF). There are critical linkages between population, development, human rights, the environment and poverty. In addition to saving and improving people's lives, addressing population and development is crucial to the achievement of regional and international agreements, including the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action and the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The time to act is now. Parliamentarians can play a key role in highlighting these linkages in this regional forum and ensuring population and development are reflected in discussions, strategies, statements and follow-up activities.

2. What are we talking about and why should we care? Some population and development facts

- According to the World Health Organisation, sexual and reproductive ill health accounts for **one-third** of the 'global burden of disease' among women of reproductive age (15-44 years old).
- UN projections suggest that between 2007 and 2050, the world will have to accommodate 2.5 billion additional people and support desperately needed advances in living standards for nearly three billion people living in poverty.
- Although 88 - 98% of maternal deaths are preventable, pregnancy remains the leading killer of women in their reproductive years in developing countries.
- Despite many international agreements affirming their human rights, women are still much more likely than men to be poor, malnourished and illiterate. Women are far less likely than men to be politically active and far more likely to be victims of domestic violence.
- Worldwide, an estimated 250 million years of productive life are lost every year as a result of reproductive health problems.
- As much as half of the earth's total biological productivity has already been diverted to human use, depleting our natural resources and impairing the capacity of life - supporting ecosystems.
- Some 340 million new cases of curable sexually transmitted infections (STIs) occur every year. The figure does not include HIV or other viral STIs which are not curable.
- By 2008, more than half of the world's population, 3.3 billion people, will be living in urban areas.
- Every minute, another woman dies in childbirth. For every woman who dies, 30 or more experience serious complications.

3. Population and development in the Pacific

If we look at the population and development situation in the Pacific, there are high rates of STIs, including HIV, and unplanned teenage pregnancy. A recent study across five Pacific Island countries showed an average prevalence of the Sexually Transmitted Infection (STI) chlamydia at 18 percent.¹ In Papua New Guinea, a generalized epidemic² of HIV is growing and there are high rates of maternal mortality. At the same time there is low use of modern contraceptives in the region.

Pacific populations are largely youthful. Parts of the region are experiencing rapid population increase which has placed pressure on environmental resources. The Pacific population is expected to double in the next 35 years and the future of some areas is threatened due to climate change and urbanization. Violence against women, including emotional, physical and sexual violence, is a serious issue across the Pacific. According to a recent study, discrimination against women by restricting access to schools, hospitals and jobs is costing Asia - Pacific countries nearly \$80 billion a year.³ In a 2007 study, the Pacific region ranked second lowest in terms of the regional average of women in National Parliaments.⁴

However, engagement and action on population and development is growing. The region is full of strong people and networks and there are real opportunities to address these challenges.

4. WHAT CAN WE DO?

What role can Parliamentarians play in addressing population and development?

- Parliamentarians are key to building healthy populations and creating positive development.
- Parliamentarians can develop their own understanding of population and development in order to become effective advocates.
- Parliamentarians can lead changes in policy, laws and practices to address population and development.
- Parliamentarians can mobilize resources towards population and development.
- Parliamentarians can work with their communities, civil society and their peers in other countries to share strategies and build understanding and capacity.

¹ WHO, SPC, UNSW and The Global Fund, Second Generation Surveillance Study of HIV, other STIs and Risk Behaviours in 6 Pacific Island Countries, 2004 – 2005.

² A generalised epidemic is when the virus has been found in a certain number of pregnant women, who serve as a broad indication of the 'general' population.

³ UNESCAP Annual Review, 2007.

⁴ Inter-Parliamentary Union Study, 2007 <http://www.ipu.org/wmn-e/classif.htm>.

What are Parliamentarians doing in New Zealand? An introduction to the NZPPD

- The New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development (NZPPD) provides a forum for New Zealand Parliamentarians to engage and act on international population and development issues.
- The NZPPD is a cross party group, with currently 47 members representing just under 40% of all New Zealand MPs. The group is an active part of Parliamentary life in New Zealand.
- The NZPPD is part of international networks of Parliamentary groups working on population and development issues around the world. The group is a member of the Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development (PPAPD) and the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD).
- The NZPPD was established in 1998 to further the achievement of the 20 Year Programme of Action developed at the groundbreaking International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in 1994. Further background on the ICPD can be found in the next section.
- The NZPPD aims to create a supportive environment nationally and internationally for implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action by:
 - increasing informed debate and information about global population and development issues, including sexual and reproductive health;
 - creating awareness of the important role parliamentarians can play in influencing and shaping policy relating to population and development issues.
- Population and development issues are varied and widespread. Therefore, the NZPPD has focused its activities largely on the following strategic areas:
 - Sexual and reproductive health, including HIV and AIDS;
 - Overseas Development Assistance;
 - improving the status of women;
 - sustainable development;
 - a geographical focus on Asia and Pacific.
- The NZPPD Secretariat is housed within Family Planning International. FPI is a unit of the Non-Governmental Organisation New Zealand Family Planning and was established in 1997 to further the goals of the ICPD Programme of Action.
- FPI works to raise awareness domestically and globally of international population and development issues, and improve access to quality sexual and reproductive health information and services in developing countries. FPI does this through both advocacy and project work. FPI has a geographical focus on South East Asia and the Pacific.

What does the NZPPD do?

The NZPPD have been involved in numerous and varied activities throughout the group's 10 years of existence. Some examples can be found below:

- **The NZPPD have raised issues with the New Zealand Parliament in debates, resolutions, meetings and briefings.** Issues addressed include: gender based violence; youth sexual and reproductive health; the US Mexico City Policy; Overseas Development Assistance and support for the ICPD. For

example, in 2006, NZPPD drove a successful budget bid for New Zealand to increase its Overseas Development Assistance (ODA).

- **The NZPPD has held Open Hearings on population and development issues in New Zealand.** These open hearings have provided opportunities for dialogue between the government and NGOs on population and development. Corresponding media coverage, reports and sustained follow-up have increased awareness and action. The NZPPD have also shared the findings and lessons learned with colleagues in the region. For example, in 2005, the NZPPD held an Open Hearing on the prevention of violence against women and children. The resulting report *Creating a Culture of Non Violence* makes recommendations for ensuring the New Zealand government fulfils its domestic commitments to eliminating violence against women and children. The report was distributed widely in the region. The Open Hearing was referred to in New Zealand's Sixth Report on its Implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in 2006. Following the open hearing, the then NZPPD Chair was invited to sit on a cross-ministerial Taskforce on Family Violence.
- **The NZPPD has participated in Study Tours on population and development** In addition to building Parliamentarians understanding of the issues, the Study Tours have resulted in media coverage and provided evidence and an opportunity to advocate on population and development. For example, in 2006, NZPPD members participated in a Study Tour to Papua New Guinea. NZPPD members shared their findings and recommendations for action in a report: *Study Tour to Papua New Guinea: raising awareness of the Millennium Development Goals in the Pacific*, and in following up meetings and correspondence. The Study Tour received good media coverage, both in Papua New Guinea and New Zealand. In 2007, Tim Barnett, New Zealand MP and NZPPD member, visited Papua New Guinea for an update on developments since the Study Tour.
- **Other activities by the NZPPD include:** participating in regional reviews of the ICPD Programme of Action; hosting the New Zealand launch of UNFPA's State of World Population reports; and providing briefings at the New Zealand Youth Parliament 2007, to Parliamentary staff and other Parliamentarians on population and development. The NZPPD continues to develop its relationship with New Zealand's International Aid and Development Agency (NZ Aid) and other Parliamentarians throughout the region.

What is the international framework? The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

- The ICPD took place in 1994 in Cairo, where 179 governments gathered together to discuss population and development issues.
- The ICPD heralded a new approach to the relationship between population and development based on human rights, rather than technical demographics. ICPD moved population policy and programmes from a focus on numbers, to a focus on individual human lives.
- It was recognised that population and development are closely linked.
- Empowering women and meeting people's needs for education and health, including reproductive health, are necessary for *both* individual advancement and balanced development.
- The Programme of Action's goals, to be achieved by 2015, include:

- universal education;
 - reducing infant, child and maternal mortality;
 - universal access to reproductive health care, including family planning, assisted childbirth and prevention of STIs, including HIV and AIDS;⁵
 - empowerment of women;
 - sustainable development.
- Since 1994, world leaders have reaffirmed commitment to the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action many times.
 - Through commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, the international community has identified a number of goals relating to the population and development challenges the world faces and actions required to achieve these. As one of the 179 government signatories of this Programme of Action, New Zealand has committed to achieve these.
 - Addressing population and development is also key to achieving other international agreements, including the Millennium Development Goals. This point is outlined further on Page 7 of this document.

What can I do as a delegate to the APPF?

- Highlight the following points in discussions forums, resolutions, statements of commitment, the media and conversations with other APPF delegates. Shared learning, understanding and regional cooperation is vital.
- Note the existence of the Pacific Parliamentary Assembly on Population and Development (PPAPD) and the Asian Forum for Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) in the context of discussions around regional cooperation and the future work of APPF.

- **Investing in population and development can help eliminate poverty.** For example, a vast range of credible research (e.g.: Bernstein and Juul Hansen, 2006⁶) shows how ensuring that individuals can enjoy healthy sexual and reproductive lives contributes to: macroeconomic stability and growth; reduction of household poverty; building an educated and healthy population; empowering women; and environmental sustainability. Improving sexual and reproductive health is among the most cost effective of all development investments, reaping personal, social and economic benefits.⁷
- **Investing in population and development can help us reach international agreements, including the Millennium Development Goals.** In 2000, the Millennium Summit saw 189 world leaders agree to a set of time-bound and

⁶ UNDP, *Public Choices, Private Decisions: Sexual and Reproductive Health and the Millennium Development Goals*, 2006.

⁷ Sevilla, B.C., David Canning and Jaypee Sevilla, *The demographic divided: a new perspective on the economic consequences of population change*, 2001.

measurable goals and targets relating to poverty. These were named the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). It is widely recognised that the MDGs will not be realised without the full achievement of the ICPD Programme of Action. Population and development are central to the attainment of the MDGs. World leaders recognised this in 2005 when a new target was agreed under Millennium Development Goal 5 'Improve Maternal Health' to achieve universal access to reproductive health by 2015. The following indicators have been agreed for this new target: adolescent birth rate; antenatal care coverage; and unmet need for family planning.

"The Millennium Development Goals, particularly the eradication of extreme poverty and hunger, cannot be achieved if questions of population and reproductive health are not squarely addressed. And that means stronger efforts to promote women's rights, and greater investment in education and health, including health and family planning."

Former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan, Message to the Fifth Asian and Pacific Population Conference, Bangkok, 2002.

- **The importance of the critical situation in the Pacific.** Many countries in the Pacific currently look unlikely to reach all of the MDGs or ICPD goals by 2015. Please refer to the section above 'Population and Development in the Pacific'. Therefore, it is vital that Parliamentarians in the region work together to highlight and address these issues now.
- **Population, development and the environment are fundamentally linked.** The impact of humans on their environment is related to population size, per capita consumption and the environmental impact of the technology used to produce what is consumed. There are strong links between health, including sexual and reproductive health, and environmental degradation. For example, industrial chemicals, air pollution, pesticides, and other toxins in the environment are linked to numerous health problems, including infertility, reproductive cancers, and birth defects. A UNFPA report captures the complexity of the relationship between population and environment with these words 'population and environment are closely related but the links between them are complex and varied... involving consideration of affluence, consumption, technology and population growth, gender relations, political structures and governance at all levels'.⁸ The ICPD Programme of Action states that "Governments, international agencies, NGOs and other concerned parties should undertake timely and periodic reviews of their development strategies, with the aim of assessing progress towards integrating population into development and environment programmes that take into account patterns of production and consumption and seek to bring about population trends consistent with the achievement of sustainable development and improving the quality of life."
- **The importance of a rights based approach to population and development.** The ICPD heralded a new approach to population and development based on human rights, rather than technical demographics. ICPD moved population policy and programmes from a focus on numbers to a focus on individual human lives. The right to development is a universal and inalienable right and an integral part of fundamental human rights.⁹

⁸ UNFPA State of the World Population Report 2001.

⁹ ICPD Programme of Action, 1994.

- **The linkages between HIV and AIDS and sexual and reproductive health.** The majority of HIV infections are sexually transmitted or associated with pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. Throughout the Pacific, 98.9% of HIV infections are contracted through sexual connections, pregnancy, breastfeeding and childbirth. HIV is a sexual and reproductive health issue. Sexual and reproductive health and HIV and AIDS share root causes, including poverty, gender equality and social marginalization of the most vulnerable populations. Addressing HIV as a sexual and reproductive health issue can maximize health and development outcomes for the resources invested, strengthen health systems, and minimize duplication and mixed messages.
- **The importance of considering gender issues as a major cross cutting theme in development.** Advancing gender equality and equity and the empowerment of women, and the elimination of all kinds of violence against women, and ensuring women's ability to control their own fertility, are cornerstones of population and development- related programmes.¹⁰

As former United Nations Secretary-General Kofi A. Annan stated:

“...study after study has taught us that there is no tool for development more effective than the empowerment of women. No other policy is as likely to raise economic productivity, or to reduce infant and maternal mortality. No other policy is as sure to improve nutrition and promote health - including the prevention of HIV/AIDS. No other policy is as powerful in increasing the chances of education for the next generation.”

- **The importance of both aid and trade as complementary in development.** Trade can provide some economic benefits, but it is not sufficient alone to achieve sustainable development. To achieve sustainable development there needs to be a number of concurrent factors working together such as good governance, support and protection of human rights and the involvement and participation of people in any projected development processes. For less developed countries to benefit from trading partnerships, trade regulations must be fair. Trade policies and practice must protect and promote the interests of communities and build on local, regional and national development. International trade and foreign direct investment (FDI) can play important roles in development, but they are not substitutes for high-quality aid.¹¹ Effective aid can: increase economic growth; assist in building environments conducive to trade; lower corruption; and build healthy, secure and democratic societies.
- **The importance of effective partnerships between governments and NGOs.** The ICPD Programme of Action affirms the importance of Governments working with the non-governmental (NGO) sector. The Asia and Pacific region has an active and knowledgeable NGO sector. To address the challenges of population and development effectively, broad and effective partnership is essential between Governments and NGOs to assist in the formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of population and development objectives and activities.¹²

¹⁰ ICPD Programme of Action, 1994.

¹¹ New Zealand Council for International Development, *Missing the Point: Why Trade is Insufficient for Development*, 2007.

¹² ICPD Programme of Action, 1994.

- **The importance of engaging youth.** As noted above, the Pacific is increasingly becoming a youthful population. The importance of engaging and working in partnership with youth is becoming ever more apparent. Youth are the leaders of tomorrow, but can also be involved in ensuring that the leadership of today is relevant and effective to their needs and that of current and future generations. Ensuring youth have access to sexual and reproductive health and rights as they enter their reproductive years can ensure they can manage their fertility, gain an education, find employment, and contribute to the economy.
- **The importance of international and regional cooperation.** The development and sharing of strategies, evidence and information to support political will and understanding on population and development is vital at the regional and international levels.

Are you interested to know more?

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