

**Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly**  
Beijing, 17-18 October, 2002

**Beijing Declaration**

Preamble

We, ... parliamentarians from 27 countries of Asia-Pacific countries have assembled again in Beijing, China, for the 7<sup>th</sup> General Assembly and 20 years celebration of AFPPD. The present Assembly is a continuation of the past six assemblies successively held in New Delhi, Beijing, Bangkok, Kuala Lumpur, Canberra and Nigata. Looking back on the course of the activities of Asian Forum in the past 20 years since its founding, we fully affirm its achievements. After extensive discussions, at the two-day Assembly, on population and development with the relevant opportunities and challenges, we have reached a broad consensus and unanimously reaffirmed our commitment to population and development.

Since its founding in Beijing in 1981, the Asian Forum has dedicated itself to raising awareness of and advocating for population and development issues among elected representatives and -through them- members of the general public. It has established a national forum of relevant representatives in most of the countries in the region and has also helped form the regional forums in the Africa and Arab region and Europe;

The population of the Asia-Pacific region was 3.52 billion in 1995. Although population growth is slowing in some countries, the region's population generally will still continue to increase. It is projected to increase to 4.58 billion by the year 2020. This equals an increase of over 1 billion or 30 percent over 25 years. Moreover, with the acceleration of urbanization and aging and the spread of AIDS epidemic, population growth has brought about numerous new challenges to the region in addition to its pressure on resources and ecological environment;

Humankind is confronted with complex and profound challenges taking place all over the world. We are called upon by the new situation to proceed from the larger interest of harmony between human beings and nature and complementarity between environment and development and to take the road of sustainable development with stronger determination and commitment.

## Call for Action

We.....

Reaffirm the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and the Cairo and Hague Declarations on Population and Development adopted by the Parliamentarians on the eve of ICPD and later at the review of ICPD. In order to pursue and promote the population and development programme and meet the new challenges. AFPPD urges the parliaments of various countries to mobilize more of their members to take part in the activities of this field;

Urge all governments to continuously formulate and improve laws and regulations on control of population growth, environmental protection, resource management, and disaster prevention and reduction;

Urge all governments to implement the ICPD Programme of Action with renewed vigour as population planning is the base for future development strategy, involvement of civil society, and strategies emphasizing the inter-relations among population, water, food security, natural resources and poverty;

Urge all governments to clearly integrate poverty reduction strategize into population and development programmes, while recognizing that in spite of economic growth, poverty is widely prevalent in the region with more than one billion people living below the poverty line, and realizing that poverty is closely linked to various aspects of population growth;

Urge all Governments to ensure that international agreements and conventions, especially those on environmental issues are fully consistent with food and water security, acknowledging the inseparable strong linkages between population and sustainable development, and appreciating the recent UN World Summit on Sustainable Development, we call on all countries to take measures to carry out the follow-up activities of the World Summit, and Basic needs and conditions for human survival should be given priority, including food security in the process of economic development. Population factor should be taken into full consideration in the implementation of those international agreements, conventions and relevant national strategies;

Call on the United Nations, and in particular the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), to continue to play an important role in helping countries formulate and implement population policies

and strategies;

Also call upon Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP), as the regional organization of the United Nations dedicated to economic and social development, to accord priority to population and development in its efforts to assist the member countries to formulate, implement and monitor their population, including reproductive health programmes as population factors play a significant role in development;

Reiterate with concern that the resources available for population and reproductive health are not sufficient and funding is declining. We call upon all donor governments to increase the official development assistance to population related programmes. We also urge our fellow parliamentarians to strive to increase investment in the social and health sectors, particularly, for population and development and call on all partners concerned to ensure that available resources are used effectively and efficiently;

Recognize that HIV/AIDS is an extremely serious issue that requires an urgent, coordinated response in many of our countries, and urge our fellow parliamentarians to increase their efforts to ensure effective HIV/AIDS legislation, preventive measures as well as treatment and care for people living with HIV/AIDS;

Realize that young people are especially prone to risk behaviour, including unprotected sex, and drug use, making them vulnerable to acquire HIV/AIDS and other STDs. About 50% of the new HIV/AIDS infections in Asia occur in the age group of 15-24 years. We urge our fellow parliamentarians to place special emphasis on adolescent reproductive health, and to ensure that young people are paid full attention and provided with more convenient services;

Ensure protection of the rights of women; emphasize that sexual abuse and violence against women cause and sustain the psychological and physical impairment of women, and emphasize that the elimination of violence against women is fundamental to the achievement of women's rights and until that issue is addressed, sustainable and equitable national and regional development cannot be achieved;

Urge our fellow parliamentarians to plan policies that ensure that the elderly are well taken care of and that their needs and rights are respected, while noting the substantive increases in the proportion of elderly people in many countries of the region, and the effect ageing has on economic, social, and health developments,

Realizing the oncoming crisis for clean drinking water for the masses, the parliamentarians should encourage Government Organizations, Non-Government Organizations, and civil societies to create awareness to save water through water harvesting and other ingenious methods, and ensure that water is available to all, particularly to the people from developing countries who live in poverty.

## Pledge

We pledge....

To act more effectively to ensure that our government give due attention to the population and development programmes and emphasize their inter-relations with food security, water, environment, and poverty;

To ensure that population and development programmes are effectively implemented, through monitoring the programmes and educating our constituency members to use the services;

To oppose any move to dilute the population agenda as we firmly believe that development, food security, and poverty reduction are not possible without proper population planning;

To ask our governments to emphasize the importance of population policies and programmes in development, food security and poverty reduction work undertaken by ESCAP, at the forthcoming Asian and Pacific Population Conference;

To bring to the attention of our fellow parliamentarians the importance of the HIV/AIDS issue and motivate them to ensure that an effective and adequately funded national policy and programme is in place by the earliest time possible;

To involve women parliamentarians in our committees and programmes and to give emphasis to gender equality and equity at the national level;

To increase our efforts to remove legal, social and cultural barriers that prevent women from fully participating in society;

To urge developed countries to ensure that increased resources are allocated for population and reproductive health, and HIV/AIDS related programmes in their ODAs, and urge UNFPA to continue to support the parliamentarians' involvement in population and development programmes at the national and regional level;

To recognize AFPPD as an important forum for the exchanges of the parliaments and parliamentarians of the Asia-Pacific region. It also serves as an important channel to increase exchanges among the

people of the region to gain more mutual understanding, confidence and cooperation. We believe that with the common efforts of parliamentarians from various countries, the Asian Forum will continuously develop and make greater contribution to the realization of population growth in harmony with socio-economic development, resource utilization and environmental protection for the sake of sustainable development and food security in the Asia-Pacific Region.

AFPPD Statement

Food Security Standing Committee Meeting

8<sup>th</sup> February 2003

Bangkok, Thailand

***“No child should be born into the world just to starve and die”.***

Words of the late Mr. Takashi Sato, AFPPD’s first Chairman

The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) and its members gathered at a special meeting of its Standing Committee on Food Security on 7 and 8 February 2003 in Bangkok, where in depth deliberations on the pressing issue of food security in the context of future population and development in the wake of globalization took place.

***Whereas:***

As parliamentarians, our mission is to create and perpetuate a society that will preserve human dignity. For this reason AFPPD has been working for more than twenty years in the field of population and development.

Our past activities have generated numerous statements and declarations not only in Asia but the world over. We strongly believe that inevitable future trend of population increase should be clearly reflected in all international agreements, conventions and treaties especially in WTO deliberations.

***We reaffirm The Hague Declaration of Parliamentarians on ICPD Review, especially, paragraph 19: ‘The rules of international trade must be fully consistent with the long-term perspective of food security.’ And also the United Nations General Assembly document A/S-21/5/Add.1, especially, Paragraph 16 “Population-related goals and policies outlined in the Programme of Action need to be reflected, as appropriate, in international agreements in such areas as environment and trade.’***

Unfortunately, discussions on international trade to date fail to incorporate population issues. We note that population, food production and its distribution are the pillars upon which food security stands.

Food is essential for human survival; this means food is not merely a commercial product, but vital for our very existence.

During most on-going discussions on international trade, preconditions are set down by an affluent

society. However, long-term population trends indicate a very different scenario for the future.

***Whereas:***

In 2050, global population will exceed 9 billion. Now, our consumption has already exceeded the renewable limit of global environmental capacity<sup>1</sup>.

1.3 billion live on less than one dollar per day.

800 million children are under-nourished

It is estimated that 2 billion hectares, or one sixth of the world's land area are degraded as a result of over grazing, poor farming practices, and rapid urbanization.

It is impossible to sustain our excessive food supply in the long term because we are faced with the shortage of new arable land, freshwater resources, and expanding salinization of irrigated land.

***Therefore,***

We, the parliamentarians from the Asia Pacific region and members of AFPPD's Food Security Standing Committee, agree to take the following actions vis-à-vis food security in the region in the context of international trade agreements including WTO agreement. We believe that future population trends call for a new perspective on international societies and international trade, and we pledge to take the following actions.

***We call upon each respective government and international society;***

To identify and implement a national minimum wage system;

Every nation must exert efforts to create employment as well as to ensure appropriate domestic social policies and, wherever possible, maintain self-sufficiency utilizing sustainable food production.

To draw up a country plan incorporating a development strategy with a funding arrangement and a time frame for accomplishing the above objectives to provide a framework of mutual cooperation within the international community through the establishment of an Asian Monetary Fund (AMF);

To promote autonomy of the poor, undertake a review and reorganization of land and monetary systems such as the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh, to help the poor to have access to land, water and genetic resources;

To make it possible for the people of every country to be able to manage their country's resources and national assets.

To encourage international cooperation among countries in pursuit of their national development goals.

***We call upon all international trade organizations including WTO;***

To recognize that access to safe and nutritious food is a basic human right.

To recognize that it is essential that countries maintain their rights to self- sufficiency in terms of domestic staple food production.

To pay serious attention to significantly increasing world population in the coming five decades, coupled with the decline in productivity of agricultural outputs, depletion and contamination of fresh water resources, soil erosion and environmental degradation which are threatening food security.

To recognize that under the current situation and present estimations, world carrying capacity has already exceeded its sustainable limits.

To ensure the provision of appropriate storage (such as Food Bank) and fair and equitable distribution systems.

To be aware that the *comparative advantage* principle is applicable mainly to a food surplus society and not to a food deficit society due to the high price factor.

To have provisions to prevent various types of subsidies for food export because subsidies destroy the foundations of food production and have been harming the environment.

## Strasbourg Statement of Commitment 2004

We Parliamentarians from all over the world gather in Strasbourg, France, on 18-19 October 2004 to reaffirm and deepen the commitment we made in Ottawa, Canada, in November 2002, to mobilize the resources and create the enabling policy environment needed to meet the goals of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD).

We further reaffirm our commitment to sustainable development and its three pillars of economic growth, social progress and environmental protection.

We affirm that the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the key actions of its five-year review are essential in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

We therefore fully agree with UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan that “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 reproductive health and family planning”.

We accept our duty and responsibility to promote and defend the sexual and reproductive health and rights of all individuals, including their right to decide freely and responsibly the number and spacing of their children; to defend and advance gender equality, gender equity and women’s empowerment; and to eliminate all forms of discrimination, coercion and violence against women.

We recognize that the decision to defend these principles is the difference between a life with hope and opportunity and a life of despair and desperation and, worse, the difference between life and death itself.

We therefore accept our duty and responsibility to protect and advance these principles to full implementation by 2015.

### Key challenges

We acknowledge that this Commitment is made at the mid-point of the 20-year ICPD Programme of Action. With this in mind, we recognize that many important gains have been made in the 10 years since the ICPD Programme of Action was adopted in Cairo in 1994, as reflected, most notably, in the

Global Survey conducted by UNFPA and in the parliamentary and UN regional reviews of national progress in implementing the Programme of Action. But we also recognize that key challenges remain to implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and achieving the MDGs, including the following:

Every minute, a woman dies of pregnancy-related complications, all but a very small number of them in developing countries and almost all of them preventable.

Obstetric complications are the leading cause of death for women of reproductive age in developing countries.

This life and death issue has not been given priority in most countries; thus the global number of maternal deaths per year has not changed significantly since 1994.

One third of all pregnant women receive no health care during pregnancy; 60 per cent of deliveries take place outside of health facilities; and only half of all deliveries are assisted by skilled birth attendants, although rates vary from place to place and are often lower among the poorest of the poor.

Refugees, internally displaced people, war-affected women and girls and disabled people are especially vulnerable to reproductive health risks, including deplorable levels of sexual violence. Although there is greater awareness of the importance of addressing such needs, including HIV prevention and treatment for sexual violence, in emergency and complex conflicts, humanitarian budgets seldom include resources for life-saving reproductive health responses.

Poverty dramatically increases a woman's chances of dying. The lifetime risk of a woman dying in pregnancy or childbirth in West Africa is 1 in 12; the comparable risk in developed regions is 1 in 2,800. Poverty will never be eased or the MDGs attained without the full implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

Some 200 million poor women in developing countries have an unmet need for effective contraception. Meeting their needs is feasible and would cost about \$3.9 billion a year and would prevent 23 million unplanned births, 22 million induced abortions, 142,000 pregnancy-related deaths, including 53,000 from unsafe abortions, and 1.4 million infant deaths.

In two decades, the AIDS pandemic has claimed over 20 million lives, 3 million of them in 2003,

with little hope for improvement in 2004, as the pandemic continues to accelerate in many regions in the world. Today, over 38 million people are living with HIV/AIDS.

Fewer than 20 per cent of people at high risk of HIV infection have access to proven prevention interventions, which, if dramatically scaled up, could avert an estimated 29 million to 45 million new infections by 2010.

In 2003, there were 5 million new HIV infections. Women accounted for nearly half of all infected adults and nearly three-fifths of those in sub-Saharan Africa.

Half of all new HIV infections are among young people – four infections every minute – with young women particularly at risk, especially in Africa, where the infection rates for young women are two to three times those of young men.

Some 2.8 billion people – two in five – still struggle to survive on less than \$2 a day; 1.2 billion of these people live on less than \$1 per day. More than half are women.

Political instability and armed conflict impede poverty eradication and sustainable development.

Half a billion people live in water-stressed or water-scarce countries, and underground water extraction is depleting supplies with serious implications for future food security; by 2025, the number of people living in such countries is expected to multiply five- to seven-fold.

Polluted water affects the health of 1.2 billion people every year and contributes to the death of 15 million children under five every year.

Some 800 million people are chronically malnourished, and 2 billion people lack food security.

In the next four and a half decades, the proportion of people aged 60 and over will double, from approximately one in ten to one in five, many of whom will live in poverty and will require public assistance for social and health services.

#### Call to Action

We Parliamentarians commit ourselves to the following actions and call on Parliamentarians

everywhere to also commit themselves to these actions:

Strive to commit the United Nations to establish in 2005, on the occasion of the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration, a ninth Millennium Development Goal, based on the ICPD Programme of Action, to make sexual and reproductive health accessible to all by 2015.

Strive to fulfill the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance (ODA) and make every effort to mobilize the agreed financial resources needed to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.

Strive to attain at least 10 per cent of national development budgets and development assistance budgets for population and reproductive health programmes.

Give highest priority in national budgets, sector-wide approaches, and poverty-reduction strategies to expanding access to comprehensive reproductive health services and commodities and ensure that population and reproductive health are prominently reflected in both the preparatory discussions leading up to the five-year review of the Millennium Declaration as well as in the targets and indicators of the MDGs.

Give high priority to efforts to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity and unsafe abortion in line with WHO guidelines contained in *Safe Abortion: Technical and Policy Guidance for Health Systems* (2003), both as a public health issue and as a sexual and reproductive rights concern.

Strengthen safe motherhood services including the provision of maternal nutrition and antenatal care, the presence of skilled attendants during childbirth and the availability of emergency obstetric care.

Take immediate action to remedy the acute lack of qualified staff in many countries due to insufficient training, deaths from HIV/AIDS and loss of staff to developed countries.

Give the highest priority to encouraging partnership between the private sector, NGOs and government in producing and providing affordable reproductive health commodities and supplies, especially for family planning and the prevention of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

Give high priority to encouraging partnership with religious groups in the fight against HIV/AIDS at the prevention stage by holding a dialogue with them.

Mobilize the necessary additional resources to fund the unmet needs in commodities in UNFPA and IPPF-supported programmes to at least \$150 million a year and develop a road map to ensure sustainable financing, recognizing the human and economic costs of failing to do so.

Strengthen family planning services to enable women to postpone, space and limit pregnancies as they choose.

Promote men's understanding of their roles and responsibilities with regard to reproductive health and the reproductive rights of men and women, supporting their partners' as well as their own access to reproductive health care, including family planning services, helping to prevent unwanted pregnancy and reducing the transmission of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS.

Ensure that users of sexual and reproductive health programmes, including young people and people living with HIV/AIDS, are fully involved in programme development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

Mobilize support for women prior to, during and after pregnancy and childbirth through public health education campaigns and strengthened policy, legislative and regulatory frameworks to promote and protect maternal health.

Scale up and expand HIV/AIDS prevention activities and ensure that they are integrated into comprehensive sexual and reproductive health programmes.

Promote coordinated and coherent responses to HIV/AIDS that build on the principles of one national AIDS framework, one broad-based multisectoral HIV/AIDS coordinating body, and one agreed country-level monitoring and evaluation system, and promote the maximum possible integration with other relevant sexual and reproductive health services.

Urge governments to give priority to and increase resources for research on vaccines and microbicides.

Enact and enforce legislation to ensure respect for the human rights, especially sexual and reproductive rights, and dignity of AIDS orphans and people living with HIV/AIDS as well as other vulnerable groups.

Enact and enforce laws and policies that promote and protect the human rights of the girl child and young women and ensure women's equal access to education and health, particularly sexual and reproductive health, and their full participation in economic opportunities and decision making at all levels.

Implement fully international humanitarian and human rights law protecting the rights of women and girls, migrants and refugees during and after conflicts and hold accountable to the fullest extent of the law those who engage in sexual violence, exploitation, trafficking and other crimes.

Ensure that reproductive health services are provided as an integral part of humanitarian response and post-conflict transition.

Enact and enforce laws making domestic and sexual violence against women and girls, including harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation, a punishable offense and give high priority to involving all sectors of society, including political, religious and cultural leaders, in campaigns to end to such practices.

Intensify efforts to provide wider access to youth-friendly reproductive health information and services, including to married adolescents and those not in school, and provide training and life skills education to adolescents, in particular boys and young men, to promote the rights of women and girls.

Promote and protect the rights of adolescents, including their right to reproductive health information and services; strictly enforce laws on age at marriage; and seek to eliminate disparities in how boys and girls are treated and valued within families and by society.

Recognize that access to clean water is a fundamental human right, and give high priority in national development and poverty-reduction strategies to raising water productivity and conservation, including the shift to water-efficient crops and technologies; and to initiating water-pollution control programmes.

Improve access to agricultural and productive resources, including land, water and credit, particularly for women, and promote equitable and efficient distribution systems and sustainable development.

Protect the reproductive health status of women, men and children from the effects of the spraying of

agricultural crops.

Promote and protect the economic, social and political rights of older people and empower them to fully and effectively engage in the economic, political and social lives of their societies.

#### Pledge

We Parliamentarians pledge to carry out these actions and to systematically and actively monitor the progress we make in doing so. We further pledge to report regularly on this progress through parliamentary groups and to meet again in two years to assess the results we have made.

We further pledge to promote and protect the full enjoyment of fundamental human rights and freedoms of all individuals, in particular, sexual and reproductive rights.

---