

## **The Next 25 Years**

In the progress of demographic transition and development effort in respective countries, the Asian region as a whole is heading toward population stability. On the other hand, such development has created complex and diverse situations among various countries. Some countries are still experiencing population increase and high birth rates, while others are facing extremely low birth rates and an aging population. We are now at a new stage to tackle population and sustainable development issues. To further invigorate our activities related to population and development, we, members of national parliaments, who have participated in the 23rd Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development, hereby record our achievements of the past 25 years, reiterate the facts on which our efforts are premised, and determine to implement the measures below.

### Achievements of the past 25 years

1. We have been successful in lowering the total fertility rate in Asia from approximately 4.0 to 2.5 - a fundamental requirement for the stabilization of the population.
2. The incidence of extreme poverty in Asia has been greatly lessened due in large measure to the population stabilization.
3. Active parliamentary programs on population and development have not only permeated throughout the entire Asian region but have contributed to the establishments of African and Arab as well as Inter-European parliamentary forums and the creation of a worldwide parliamentary network.

### Facts

1. The earth is finite. Resolution of the population dilemma is an indispensable precondition for achieving sustainable development that enables people to continue living on this finite earth.
2. Without the stabilization of population, the stability of international society cannot be attained. The stabilization of population is thus a fundamental prerequisite for achieving human security and world peace.
3. The purpose of dealing with the population issue is to build societies in which all people can live in harmony, equity, dignity and none in scarcity.
4. The global scale of the issues forces us to face up to the reality that we are all ultimately a single community, joined by fate on a small planet.
5. Today's growing population and expanding human activities place an enormous load on the environment, so that ever stronger measures are required to cope with such environmental

catastrophe as global warming.

6. Population growth and changes of its structure is one of the major factors that has a fundamental effect on these global issues.
7. The solution to the population challenge can only be achieved by creating a living environment in which human rights including that of choice are protected, and all people can live in dignity.
8. Sexual and reproductive health/rights and services are an essential building block to sustainable development. Accessible sexual and reproductive health/rights and services, particularly to avoid maternal death and unplanned pregnancy, can help stabilize rural populations, slow urban migration and balance natural resource use with the needs of the population.
9. The promotion of family planning allows couples to choose and space their families, and reaps personal, social and economic benefits. It will slow the speed of HIV/AIDs, help to reduce poverty and encourage women's empowerment. Reproductive health and rights offer women greater choice and opportunities, and increased ability to be active in their communities and governance.
10. Now we are facing the threat of pandemic of newly emerged and re-emerged infectious diseases such as HIV/AIDs, SARS, Avian Influenza, TB and Malaria, and large-scale natural disasters.

Based on the foregoing facts we will undertake appropriate measures, reaffirming the importance of the International Conference on Population and Development –Programme of Action, “Preamble” and “Principles”. As parliamentarians, we are responsible for the policies of our respective countries. We pledge to carry out the following in order to brighten the future of human society and improve the lives of all our peoples.

#### Actions

1. One of the most effective means of improving the living environment is to disseminate sexual and reproductive information, and provide accessible services. Mindful and the commitments made in the Bangkok Statement and commitment, we will act so that all people can obtain the benefits of sexual and reproductive health as a part of their rights to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health.
2. We will promote income creation programs through sustainable development - that is, through creating industry and employment that are consistent with environmental protection - and thereby contribute to the eradication of poverty.
3. We will mobilize our government to support the adoption of indicators by member states of the

UN to monitor the target of universal access to reproductive health care and service by 2015.

4. We will create and promote networks and coalitions with our partners in civil society to address population, sexual and reproductive health and sustainability issues.
5. We will promote global co-operation and research to address the issues of food and water shortages to ensure adequate food and water security for all.
6. Recognizing the diversity of the Asian region, we will adopt and implement policies to address the impact of population aging and low birthrate on domestic policies such as social security, pensions and the vulnerability of older persons to poverty.
7. The world has the biggest generation of young people it has ever seen. It is vital we promote the role of young people in decision-making on population and sustainable development issues. Young people must have access to information and education on sexual and reproductive health, food and nutrition, and sustainable development and the environment in order to make sensible and informed decisions.
8. We need to take prompt and adequate policy, law, and budgeting to support preventive approaches, preparedness and lessen the impact of infectious diseases and natural disasters through the exchange of information, technologies, know-how and skills. For this purpose, we the parliamentarians need to promote advocacy activities in respective countries and in the international society.
9. We need to develop close global partnership for sustainable development among parliamentarians.
10. In order to achieve those purposes, we will vigorously promote legislation, help each other, in neutralizing opposition thereto, and mobilize funds in our respective countries.