



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

NEWS LETTER

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African and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting and Study Visit on Population and Development for ICPD+25 in Tanzania

The Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), which serves as the secretariat of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP), implemented a project consisting of the African and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development for ICPD+25 and Study Visit, from 5-8 August in Dar es Salaam and Zanzibar, Tanzania. The meeting and study visit were hosted by the Tanzanian Parliamentarians Association on Population and Development (TPAPD) and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the Japan Trust Fund (JTF), and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

Some 70 persons participated in this Tanzania project from 18 countries.¹ They included parliamentarians, representatives from the national committees on population and development, UNFPA and other partner organizations, senior government officials, and parliamentary officers. The discussions focused on the progress made in the 25 years since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and on parliamentary activities to address the unfinished tasks from the ICPD. The comments from the participants were compiled towards the Nairobi Summit that will commemorate the 25th anniversary of ICPD in November.



At the opening ceremony, H.E. Job Ndugai (MP; Speaker of the Parliament of Tanzania), Hon. Jamal Kassim (MP; Chair of TPAPD), and H.E. Shinichi Goto (Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Japan to Tanzania) each gave an address. Hon. Hiroyuki Nagahama (Vice-Chair of JPFP) delivered the closing address on behalf of JPFP.

The ICPD, which was held in Cairo in 1994, resulted in a “paradigm shift” from a macroscopic, country-level perspective of setting numerical targets in addressing population issues to a microscopic, individual-level perspective of guaranteeing each individual’s health and rights. For 25 years after that, reproductive rights (RR) were emphasized in the field of population, particularly in European countries, but there was also some pushback from those who felt they were being forced to accept the concept of RR and from the so-called pro-life conservative movement. As a result, division between the two groups widened. In fact, at the Commission on Population and Development (CPD), a mechanism for intergovernmental consultation, an agreement could not be reached between developed countries mainly in Europe and developing countries over the years.

From the perspective of parliamentary activities, the concept of RR was not adopted at the International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (ICPPD), which was held prior to the ICPD in Cairo and which

¹ Djibouti, Ghana, India, Japan, Kenya, Lao PDR, Liberia, Malawi, Malaysia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

contributed significantly to the formation of some of the key concepts of the ICPD. The parliamentarians decided that so long as they represented their respective cultures, religions and values, it was better to focus their efforts into setting the right conditions for introducing RR, rather than engage in discussions on questions over values.

At the meeting in Tanzania, it was clearly stated that (1) population is made up of individuals who are the very fabric of society; (2) the aim of sustainable development is to build a society in which individuals can live in dignity, and in that sense, the aim of the ICPD and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is one and the same; (3) therefore, the SDGs cannot be achieved without completing the unfinished tasks from the ICPD; (4) with respect to the issues of population, the central issue is demographic transition, and both developed and developing countries need to achieve appropriate levels of fertility in order to achieve the SDGs; and (5) both the population increase from unwanted pregnancies especially in developing countries and extreme low fertility in developed countries are manifestations of the failure to ensure RR as defined at the ICPD, and protecting RR will require that parliamentarians, as representatives of the people, to develop appropriate environmental, social and economic policies and legislation, in collaboration with UNFPA and other international organizations.



Following on the meeting on 5-6 August, the participants visited a district hospital in Dar es Salaam and the Centre of Population Studies and Research at the University of Dar es Salaam on 7 August. On 8 August, in Zanzibar, representatives from 15 local organizations working on population issues were invited to engage in discussions with the participants on pressing issues related to population and family planning

On 9 August, a press conference was held for the local media and other parties concerned to announce the declaration adopted at the meeting as well as to explain the importance of the issues of population and development and the significance of parliamentarian activities.





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