



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

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- ① The 31st Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development Held in Malaysia
- ② Nairobi Summit on ICPD25

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On 23-24 October, the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), which serves as the secretariat of the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP), organized the 31st Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development "ICPD25: Moving Forward the Unfinished Business of the ICPD" in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The meeting was hosted by AFPPD Malaysia and supported by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

Together with the African and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development (in Tanzania) and the Arab and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on Population and Development (in Morocco) organized by the APDA this year, the meeting in Kuala Lumpur was held in the lead up to the Nairobi Summit that will convene in November in commemoration of the 25th anniversary of the ICPD. Parliamentarians from the Asia-Pacific and Central Asian countries attended the meeting, with an aim to assemble opinions and views reflecting the regional characteristics of the Asian region.

At the opening session, Hon. Prof. Keizo Takemi, MP Japan, Executive Director of JPFP and Chair of AFPPD, delivered the opening address, welcoming more than 100 participants from 21 countries. In Session 2 "Drawing on Demographic Trends: Driving Economic Growth and Sustainable Development", Hon. Prof. Takemi also gave a presentation titled, "Active Aging in Asia", explaining the experience and the lessons Japan learned as a country with an advanced level of ageing.

After the Second World War, Japan set a national goal of creating a healthier middle class. It undertook a policy objective of achieving economic growth and doubling the national income. As for social security policy, it promoted health insurance and pension system reform, and introduced universal health and pension coverage in 1961. On the other hand, the percentage of people aged 75 and over in Japan will begin to rise after 2022, when the baby boomers will turn 75. The number of elderly population (aged 65 and over) is expected to peak in 2042.

Even though population ageing is unavoidable, creating a socially and economically vibrant society where people can enjoy healthy longevity will be the key to maintaining a sound and healthy society. Noting that other Asian countries are expected to follow Japan in the ageing of their societies, Hon. Prof. Takemi introduced the efforts of the Asia Health and Wellbeing Initiative (AHWIN) to promote mutual assistance and transfer of experience within the Asian region. In addition, he outlined four important pillars for sustainability of low-fertility, ageing societies, namely, (1) use of AI and IoT, (2) empowerment of women, (3) healthy longevity and employment of healthy senior citizens in the labor force, and (4) foreign workers, and stressed the importance of sharing effective policies. In the question and answer session that followed, many questions were asked on Japan's ageing society with low fertility. Hon. Prof. Takemi encouraged the participating parliamentarians to "learn lessons from Japan's experience".

Representing UNFPA, as an organization supporting this meeting, Ms. Marcela Suazo, UNFPA Country Representative for Malaysia, Mr. Arthur Erken, Director of Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships (DCS) at the UNFPA headquarters, and Ms. Annette Sachs Robertson, Deputy Director of UNFPA APRO, delivered the opening address, gave a presentation in Session 1 "Finishing the Unfinished Business of the ICPD" and made the closing address, respectively. From IPPF, Ms. Tomoko Fukuda, Regional Director for IPPF ESEAOR, gave a presentation in Session 3 "Universal Access to SRH As Part of Universal Health Coverage (UHC)".



On the next day on October 24, Session 4 "Protect and Empower Women and Girls in Humanitarian and Fragile Contexts" and Session 5 "Parliamentarians' Roles in Addressing the ICPD Unfinished Agenda: Generating Further Political and Financial Momentum" were held. In Session 6 "Discussion for the Adoption of the Parliamentarians' Recommendations for the ICPD+25", the importance of environmental and food issues was recognized in achieving sustainable development. At the same time, the parliamentarians, bearing in mind the changes in the 25 years since the ICPD, adopted a declaration that included a recommendation that it is important to achieve appropriate fertility levels that societies need for their sustenance by both preventing unwanted pregnancies and supporting couples fulfill their desire to have children, through the realization of reproductive rights (RR).

② Nairobi Summit on ICPD25

From 12-14 November, the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 was held in Nairobi, the capital of Kenya, aiming to achieve the commitments made at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, Egypt, in 1994, and to discuss actions leading up to 2030 by taking into consideration the changes that have occurred in terms of population issues in the last 25 years.

The Summit was co-hosted by the Kenyan and Danish Governments and UNFPA. Over 9,500 representatives from more than 170 countries participated. The number of commitments that were submitted to the Summit reached 1,200, and the Nairobi Statement was adopted based on those commitments.

From JPPF, Hon. Teruhiko Mashiko, Vice-Chair of JPPF, and Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada attended the Summit. Hon. Mashiko, in his presentation in the Session on "Commitment", informed about Japan's contributions to parliamentarians' activities on population and development and to the establishment of UNFPA, and stressed the importance of fulfilling the requirements for ensuring reproductive rights (RR) proclaimed at the ICPD in addressing the unfinished business of the ICPD. At the same time, he pointed out that extreme low fertility could also be an obstacle against



sustainable development, and made a recommendation for “adopting a new vision for both preventing unwanted pregnancies and supporting couples to meet their desire to have children, by ensuring people can enjoy their RR”.

Hon. Mashiko also responded to an interview by a reporter from the international news company Inter Press Service (IPS), in which he answered questions about Japan’s experience and why parliamentarians are involved in these issues. The interview was circulated around the world on the same day.



Hon. Kikawada, in his presentation during the Session on “Population and Development” at the Parliamentary Forum, said that population issues and economic development were one and the same, suggested that creating social conditions that give women the right to choose would result in an appropriate population level in each country. He then explained that Japan is promoting UHC as one of its pillars of diplomacy and is committed to women and population issues. He also touched on the Rugby World Cup hosted by Japan this year, congratulated the South African for their victory, and expressed his hopes for joining parliamentarians from other countries in tackling the issues of women’s rights and choice as “One Team”, which was the slogan for the Japanese rugby team in the world cup.

Hon. Kikawada disseminated information about the Nairobi Summit on Facebook. He posted: “At the international conferences like this, European participants have significant presence and are adept at forming international opinion... The summit gave me an opportunity to think about how to raise Japan’s presence and take part in building international consensus”.

The APDA, as the secretariat of the JPPF, played a part in mobilizing more than 20 parliamentarians, cabinet ministers, and representatives from the secretariats of national committees on population and development from 15 countries. A Russian-language news agency reported how the APDA had assisted in the participation of parliamentarians from Central Asia and other regions. The participating parliamentarians commended the Japanese government and the APDA for contributing to parliamentary activities.

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