



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

NEWSLETTER

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Symposium: The State of World Population 2019 and Nairobi Summit on ICPD25

On 18 December 2019, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Tokyo Office, JOICFP and the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA: the secretariat of JPFP) jointly organized a symposium to launch the Japanese extract version of the 2019 *State of World Population (SWOP)* report and to debrief the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 that was held in November. The symposium was attended by a total of 94 participants, including 15 parliamentarians/secretaries and members of civil society organizations (CSOs).



Hon. Teruhiko Mashiko, who serves as Vice-Chair of JPFP and participated in the Nairobi Summit, made the opening address of the symposium. In the address, he noted that in order to protect reproductive rights that were agreed and defined at ICPD, concrete, cross-cutting measures are needed, and said “How to achieve the specific measures is certainly a political issue, which requires collaboration with the government, UN agencies, CSOs, private sector companies, and academia”. He also pointed out the possibility of increasing

Japan’s contribution to this field, if the cost-effectiveness for these measures could be corroborated by scientific evidence.

In the following panel discussion under the theme “*From Cairo to Nairobi: How to realize reproductive health and rights in the ICPD Programme of Action*”, Ms. Mariko Sato, Director of UNFPA Tokyo Office, served as a moderator, while Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada, Secretary-General of JPFP, Mr. Manabu Sumi, Director of Global Health Policy Division, International Cooperation Bureau of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, Ms. Mayumi Katsube, Executive Director of JOICFP, and Dr. Miho Takao, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, who all took part in the Nairobi Summit, aired their diverse points of view as panelists.



Hon. Kikawada mentioned that the Summit successfully took up the issue of women’s rights, while more attention should be paid to linking population issues to development. He also said that to address population issues “quality is more important than quantity” and that promoting Universal Health Coverage (UHC) system and improving women’s empowerment and employment would also act against the low birth rate in Japan.



Following the panel discussion, Hon. Mizuho Fukushima made a comment, saying that in order to further improve reproductive health and rights, not only internationally, but also in Japan, it is important to continue support for gender equality and women’s empowerment.

Hon. Yoshinori Suematsu, who participated in an Arab and Asian Parliamentarians’ Meeting, which was organized by APDA in Morocco in September 2019, shared the gist of the presentation that he made in Arabic and English on that occasion. He pointed out that discussion on the complicated interpretation of reproductive rights was not very productive because it tended to overemphasize religious, historical and social differences and that discussions must be focused on specific measures to tackle population issues. He also stressed the importance of education of population and RH issues from an early age.



Hon. Ryuhei Kawada, Director of JPPF, pointed out that Japan dropped to position 121 in the *Gender Gap Index* published the day before and emphasized the need to tackle harder gender equality. He also suggested considering population issues jointly with other issues such as nutrition, given that the Tokyo Nutrition for Growth Summit will be held in Japan in 2020.

Dr. Osamu Kusumoto, Executive Director/Secretary General of APDA, made the closing address and referred to the *State of World Population* and the Nairobi Summit, which see the issue of population as an issue of each individual’s “rights” and “choices”, while if people assert only on their “rights”, it might lead to extremes and conflicts. He went on to say, “specific measures to address population issues are essential for realizing the ‘rights’ and in this sense the ‘three zero’ targets advocated by UNFPA are important. A ‘cool-headed’ approach is what it takes to achieve these targets”.



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