

**Inter-Regional Meeting for Arab and Asian Parliamentarians to Follow up on
ICPD25 Commitments
23-24 March 2021
Beirut, Lebanon**

Day 1: Meeting

The hybrid conference was held simultaneously in Beirut, Lebanon, and via video conferencing to delegates in the Asia and the Arab region. The conference was organized by the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) and the Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAPPD), hosted by the Parliament of Lebanon, supported by the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), in cooperation with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). More than 90 persons participated from more than 15 countries, including parliamentarians from Arab and Asian countries and representatives from secretariats of national committees on population and development, United Nations organizations, and civil society organizations.



Opening Session

Hon. Pierre Bou Assi, MP Lebanon

Hon. Bou Assi welcomed the delegates to the conference. He said that the agenda would further the work the two regions had achieved on population and development. He reminded delegates that the world had become a small village, and the pandemic had resulted in many hardships and had affected the world. He said the pandemic was not the first challenge and would not be the last.

Hon. Teruhiko Mashiko, MP Japan, Member of the Board of Directors of APDA, Vice-Chair of JPFP

Hon. Mashiko welcomed and thanked delegates for participation and thanked UNFPA Arab State Regional Office (ASRO) for their continued support.

In his organizer's address, he said that while the world was in a difficult situation, there was hope because there were signs that the means to fight against it were being developed. Addressing population issues was essential to achieving sustainable development. More than 115 million people had been affected by COVID-19, and more than 2.5 million people died globally. However, it was important to keep in mind that tens of millions of unwanted children are born every year.

This conference would focus on Reproductive Health and Rights (RHR) and gender-based violence (GBV). Under the COVID-19 pandemic, human and financial resources were diverted from population and reproductive rights programmes to COVID-19 responses, which had resulted in a further increase in unwanted pregnancies and childbirths and other negative consequences. There had also been an alarming increase in GBV.

Dr. Luay Shabaneh, Regional Director of UNFPA ASRO

Dr. Shabaneh thanked the Asian and Arab parliamentarians for their efforts over this COVID-19 period. He said there had been a lot of research on the pandemic's impact on the population, and it had shown that women were affected more than any other group. They made up 70% of the workers on the front lines – especially health workers. Mortality rates for women were higher, especially in the elder population.

He said he had recently visited Yemen. In this region, a woman in childbirth dies every two hours. Parliamentarians were crucial to ensuring that women were taken care of. It was also vital that legislation was passed to prevent and punish violence against women (VAW). Dr. Shabaneh gave a case history from Yemen, where he met a divorced woman who was 14 years old and a grandmother of 27. Her husband and her mother-in-law abused the grandmother at the age of 27 until she decided to leave. He noted that this was not an isolated case. There were many other similar cases across Arab and Asian countries.

Dr. Shabaneh said that the collaboration between Arab and Asian parliamentarians was essential because the lawmakers played a crucial role in legislation and financing of programmes. COVID-19 had set back some of the successes they had had over the years, and it was essential to think in creative ways to ensure effective change.

Hon. Talaat Abed Elkawi, MP Egypt

Hon. Elkawi, on behalf of Hon. Abdel-Hadi Al-Qasabi, the President of the Arab Forum (FAPPD), welcomed the delegates to the conference. He said that this meeting was crucial for the regions facing the COVID-19 pandemic, and the recommendations that would be developed during this meeting would give parliamentarians a roadmap for addressing the pandemic effectively. Furthermore, he pointed out the importance of this meeting for the host side – the Lebanese, as a sign of stability and prosperity of this country. He hoped that participants will have a fruitful discussion ahead and come with constructive ideas. He welcome delegates to Egypt for the next meeting.

Session 1: The Importance of Implementation of ICPD25 Commitment and Impact of COVID-19

**Minister Plenipotentiary Tarek El-Nabulsi, Director of Development and Social Policies
Department, League of Arab States**

Minister El-Nabulsi started his presentation by welcoming the delegates to the meeting on behalf of the League of Arab States. A report on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the Arab region showed direct implications for the citizens and pointed out the priorities for implementing the ICPD agenda and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The report looked at health and environmental consequences and their impact on vulnerable people including the elderly. It estimated that the region would lose 1.7 million jobs, leading to a sharp rise in the poverty rate. The report warned that there would be a decline in the middle class and will move eight million people down to the poverty line. It shed light on the pandemic's impact on the education system. It noted that access to equipment and technology was not available to the poor, and the reliance on digital equipment disadvantaged people with visual and audio disabilities. The report also looked at governments' initiatives and financial inputs to support business and the private sector, particularly micro-projects, to survive lockdown measures.

The report recommended to the Arab League states to set up four ministerial councils related to the social sector, health and population and three high commissions related to women, family and children. Other areas of cooperation included science and human rights dialogues. The states then could work in collaboration with each other and partnership with UN agencies.

Minister El-Nabulsi said that experts from 14 countries had met via Zoom to discuss the challenges faced by health workers during COVID-19. This included a lack of personal protective equipment (PPEs). The meeting also aimed to put into place strategies to counter the pandemic. The delegates and the World Health Organisation (WHO) reaffirmed the Palestinian people's right to access all health services. The Arab League also organized a meeting for high-level officials to enhance national initiatives to control COVID-19 and reduce its effects on people with disabilities per UNFPA guidelines. The panel recommended the inclusion of people with disabilities in their policies to confront the pandemic.

The report recommended the inclusion of people with disabilities in government policies aimed at confronting the pandemic. Various technical support programmes were set up for governments and affected parties, including workers in the private sector, limited-income families, unemployed and the elderly, so that they could access information and reduce the impact of the pandemic.

Digitization of services is encouraged for vulnerable groups. A 15-point plan was set up to reduce the impact on women. The social sector segment also launched an initiative to protect women in refugee camps and women under occupation.

With the support of the UNFPA, the social sector launched an education campaign to confront the coronavirus under the hashtag of #COVID-19TalkAboutYourStory, which enables monitoring the successful experiences of children to overcome the crisis. A similar programme was organized for the youth. Minister El-Nabulsi noted that refugees placed a heavy burden on the states as it was crucial to extend healthcare services to the refugees and displaced persons.

Hon. Pierre Bou Assi, MP Lebanon

Hon. Bou Assi said that while the impact of COVID-19 was similar in many countries in that it threatened health, the only solution to the crisis – vaccination – was creating issues as there was no equality of access between countries. COVID-19's impact on the citizens' psychological and mental

health was also significant. Because of lockdowns, the responsibility for education fell on the mother. She now had to mix the roles of being a mother with being a teacher. There was a concern that the quality of online education was poor, so children were being sacrificed because of it. These children would need to be competitive because, as a country, Lebanon was competing with India, China, Brazil, Scandinavian countries – and children would have lost two years of education.

The impact on the economy was also a crisis and COVID-19 had put back projects by two to three years. The most resourced countries will recover the quickest, while there was a fear that Lebanon would lose skilled citizens to emigration.

There were many other issues like domestic violence, child marriage, housing, and so forth that need resolution. Parliamentarians need to confront these and ensure appropriate budget and legislation to address these difficulties.

Discussion

Session Chair: Hon. Asem Araji, MP, Lebanon

Hon. Araji, Chair of the Health Commission in the Lebanese Parliament, said that Lebanon's poor economic situation was exacerbated by the deterioration of the Lebanese Pound against other currencies, and that the health sector was suffering. Due to the coronavirus, there were 1,000 patients in intensive care and another 1,400 patients in hospital. The pandemic created a problem for the health sector as the import of medical equipment was expensive. Without the government's financial support, the health sector would not survive for more than three months. Because of the country's political instability, many doctors had left to work in other Arab states. Thousands had lost their jobs, with about 25% of the population living on under \$3 a day.

Lebanon was not like this before – it was a destination for the whole Orient. Now you could see fights break out outside stores as people struggled to get subsidized products. Lebanon also had 1.5 million displaced Syrian refugees and displaced Palestinian people who would need vaccinations. This should be an international responsibility and not just the responsibility of Lebanon.

Participants

One delegate commented that while there had been epidemics before, like Ebola and MERS, COVID-19 affected all countries. Now while priorities have shifted toward fighting the pandemic, existing problems continued. For example, every hour in the Arab world, a woman dies of breast cancer. The Ebola epidemic experience showed that Ebola's mortality was less than the mortality from poor services extended to mothers. Lebanon was committed to the SDGs, including inclusive health coverage and reproductive health. Vulnerable people include the disabled, and specialized legislation could empower them to secure access to services and education.

Another delegate commented that ending GBV and child marriage was the most important goals of UNFPA. There were some indications in the Arab world that female circumcision impacted 55% of girls aged between 15 and 19 years old, and one out of five girls marry before they are 18. There was concern that the pandemic could lead to 13 million child marriage and 2 million female circumcisions that could have been prevented. To work toward the 2030 Agenda, UNFPA launched its first digital ambassador for girls – named Mariam. She is a 15-year-old Arab girl who advocates for change to improve the realities for many adolescent girls. In addition, UNFPA works with UNICEF to eliminate female circumcision, implementing the biggest two programmes to stop these practices. Those programmes are available in Egypt, Djibouti, Sudan and Somalia and had achieved a lot of success since

2008, but COVID-19 has impacted the delivery of services. That is why UNFPA had recommended that programmes include mechanisms for social protection and also target men and youth in the dialogue.

A third delegate, who is from the Lebanese Union for Disabled people, said he was pleased that disability had been discussed because Lebanon had many disabled people – and even more were disabled after the Beirut explosion.

Session 2: Addressing Reproductive Health and Rights and Gender-Based Violence in the Arab Region

Hon. Souhail Alouini, MP Tunisia

Hon. Alouini said that Tunisia had very similar conditions to Lebanon. He hoped that the COVID-19 pandemic would be resolved soon. He then went through the history of the ICPD25. The latest meeting was in Nairobi, where parliamentarians, civil society, governments, and community organizations met to renew their commitments to achieve the SDGs – including ending maternal deaths, zero unmet needs for family planning and GBV.

Hon. Alouini then gave some of the latest statistics from the Arab world. These included growth in contraception use from 11% in 1969 to 33% in 1994 and 48% today. He recognized that in the Arab world, this area was far behind on the goals. He said that every child had the right to live in dignity, be educated and find decent work, and the success of this was linked to the number of children in families.

Hon. Alouini was concerned that the COVID-19 pandemic had led to an increase in the numbers of women who die in childbirth because of the disruption in health services and because women feared to seek medical help, particularly giving birth with the help of a midwife.

He also expressed his concern about the high number of child brides, estimated at 700,000 and said one in three girls get married before the age of 18. Efforts were needed to bring down the numbers of child brides in the Arab world to preserve their mental, psychological and physical health. Conflicts in Libya, Yemen, Syria and Iraq meant there were many issues in addressing reproductive health and rights, as well as women and girls' rights. He said that midwives could play a crucial role in bringing down infant mortality and shared an example in Indonesia in which the training of midwives had led to the decrease in maternal deaths.

Due to the improvement in family planning, the total fertility rate has reduced in the Arab world. In 1969 there were 6.9 children per couple; in 1994 it was 4.5, now it was 3.3. These statistics were still too high. Hon. Alouini emphasized that under the COVID-19 pandemic progress in the ICPD Programme of Action had stalled and thus further actions were needed.

Ms. Lina Sabra, Executive Director of the Lebanese Association for Family Health (SALAMA)

Ms. Sabra outlined the commitments made in the Arab region. Most governments adopted action plans regarding reproductive health and sexual health in their programmes of action for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This framework gave the governments renewed momentum to achieve the reproductive health and sexual health objectives, and there was some progress in the past decades. However, much more needs to be done to achieve the goals. There are 190 million women who want to avoid pregnancy and but do not know about or have access to contraceptives.

One woman in three was exposed to violence from the partner or sexual violence. Sexual and reproductive health and rights might be lifesaving, but these progressive aspirations were not translated into actions on the national level, and as a result, women's lives were not impacted.

The Nairobi Summit was held to accelerate to implementation of the ICPD agenda. Governments, parliamentarians, civil society, academics, private sector and international financial institutions and other relevant stakeholders gathered to ensure the 2030 Agenda was met. IPPF committed itself to making this agenda a reality and ensuring that everyone had access to SRH services, safe abortion, sexual education, and that sexual violence and GBV was ended.

For the Arab world, 12 governments had made 69 commitments. Of these, 59 commitments were linked directly to priority topics, including access to SRH services. Following the summit, some countries had adopted a more progressive approach, although because of laws in the countries, none had committed to safe abortions.

The COVID-19 pandemic had increased GBV, and access to SRH services had declined. She called on the whole world to focus on Nairobi Commitments and translate them into tangible actions. To prioritize SRH, governments must adopt a strategic approach related to SRH and focus on universal health coverage and the SDGs.

Discussion

Session Chair: Hon. Khadija Elham, MP Afghanistan

Hon. Elham said that she was pleased with the discussion, mainly about the SDGs and GBV. In Afghanistan, the security situation remained highly volatile, and women could not leave their homes to work, and GBV was very high.

Participants

A member representing Palestine said that young girls in Palestine were killed every day for various reasons and that criminals were not duly punished. She proposed that all violence against women (VAW) should be criminalized. She added that sustainable development was one of the challenges in Palestine because of the Israeli occupation. She asked that parliamentarians in the Arab countries to lobby to force Israel to commit to international laws and that refugees were returned their lands. She also said it was important that people of Palestinian origin be released from Israeli prisons.

In answer to questions from the floor, it was clarified that in Tunisia both traditional and modern contraceptives were used and that women had access to medical abortions.

Session 3: Youth and Women Engagement in Addressing ICPD25 Commitments

Dr. Samar Haddad, Former MP, President of Union Toward Civilized Society, Lebanon

Dr. Haddad said she was looking at women from two points of view. The first discussed women's needs and rights, and the second talked about obstacles they faced. Women constitute half of the world's population, but there was a real gap between men and women in terms of equality. Women had limited access to resources and were more vulnerable. In the face of a crisis, it would reveal that

investment and improving women's situation could give positive results in terms of livelihood, and quality of life and development in general.

Ignoring this gap impacts on society and its development. International research during the pandemic indicated that efforts to decrease the gap have slowed down – politically and in terms of health care, etc. The areas experiencing armed conflict were impacted even more.

There are several challenges for women, especially in Lebanon. Stereotypical thinking, which relied on traditions, impacted women in rural areas and marginalised areas. Women were expected to work at home and be housewives. This resulted in unequal access to resources. COVID-19 made the situation even worse. It impacted fundamental rights. Development would need to give women a healthy good life and a good level of education, which would affect their work opportunities and political and economic participation.

VAW and children had increased both in Lebanon and the world. In Lebanon, a hotline on domestic violence saw a 100% increase in calls. During lockdowns, this became a problem because the perpetrator lived in the same place as the victim. There seemed few attempts to bring perpetrators to justice. However, ironically women in Lebanon had been at the forefront of demanding political change. She concluded that it was essential to focus on the ICPD25 agenda for meeting women's needs and rights.

Hon. Sami Fatfat, MP Lebanon

Hon. Fatfat, as the youngest parliamentarian, represented the youth. He noted that the government's lockdown had left and would leave a social, psychological and physical impact on the youth. They found life hard because there was a lack of support. Unemployment and the lack of prospects had impacted their psychological health. This led some to drugs and others to depression.

The disruption to education during the pandemic was a disaster, especially as many youths could not connect to the internet and could not participate in the online educational offerings. This resulted in even more dropouts from school.

Lebanon's economy was fragile, and many young people work in the informal sector where there is a lack of worker protection. The people most impacted by COVID-19 were young people; 41% of the youth were affected. Since many companies had closed, the unemployment rate was increasing and affecting the country. He called on other countries in the region to assist – this was a burden that needed to be shared.

Hon. Fatfat also said that some budget had been set aside for youth development, but what was needed was a proper plan, including a cheaper housing plan. As youth, it was necessary to stand together to pressure the government to achieve its goals.

Discussion

Session Chair: Hon. Mohammed Omer Arteh, MP Somalia

Participants

A delegate from Cambodia asked a question about online education. The reply was that the Minister of Education was looking at access to online teaching and a system where students can access the same resources offline.

A representative of the Federation of Disabled People requested the conference also looked at the special needs of disabled people, including infrastructure that will enable disabled people to access learning and education.

Session 4: Role of Parliamentarians in addressing the ICPD25 Commitments

Hon. Amira Alser, MP Sudan

Hon. Alser gave a historical summary of the ICPD Programme of Action from its inception in 1994 in Egypt which recognized sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as fundamental human rights for the first time. Twenty-five years later, in Nairobi, more than 7,000 delegates met to accelerate the ICPD Programme of Action.

At the Nairobi summit, 12 governments in the Arab world agreed to 69 commitments; 59 were closely linked to priority subjects regarding SRH, GBV and gender equality. GBV and sexual violence and universal health coverage (UHC) had the highest number of commitments in the Arab world, with 18 commitments for each one. Gender equality had 16 commitments. For sexual education, six countries pledged nine commitments. There were no commitments for abortion. Lebanon had tangible policies for SRH, and Tunisia also had programmes and legislation that focused on women and men with specific objectives.

Hon. Alser gave some examples of countries with specific programmes to address the ICPD Programme of Action. Morocco had inclusive sexual education, and Tunisia has information regarding SRH and GBV. Lebanon has legislation to execute the ICPD Programme of Action, while Mauritania had measures for SRH. Somalia had a programme to end discrimination against women.

Hon. Alser emphasized that parliamentarians should execute Programme of Action to achieve the SDGs and ensure no one is left behind. It was also crucial that parliamentarians execute their roles and make the laws stronger in the Arab countries. Parliamentarians should also ensure that the laws were implemented and that the implementation was overseen. It was also crucial to ensure all the institutions made commitments to fulfilling their duties as per the Nairobi Commitment. She suggested that parliamentarians should work closely with CSOs and because of cultural backgrounds, such dialogue was crucial to achieving outcomes. Hon. Alser suggested that women scholars, especially experts in Islamic legislation, would help change perceptions.

Hon. Viplove Thakur, Former MP India, Vice-Chair of IAPPD

The presentation gave details on India's various developments, including the improvement in life expectancy, decreased fertility rate, halving of child marriages, reduced teenage pregnancies and reduced GBV. However, the country still had huge challenges, including an estimated 4 million women who want to avoid pregnancy but whose needs are not met. Four women die giving birth every hour, one in three women face some sort of violence, one in three of the world's child brides comes from India, and the country has huge social and economic disparities across the states.

It was suggested that parliamentarians had the following roles to play:

- Assure commitments are backed by needed financial investments/budgets both at the national and state levels;
- Confirm HR availability in health institutions and community is assured of continuous services;
- Ensure mechanisms such as village health committees and other initiatives have a strong community and local leadership support;

- Advocate for delaying marriage and educate on ill-effects of early childbearing;
- Promote the safety of girls and women and ensure all girls complete at least class 12;
- Support programmes for young people, such as adolescent health programmes, skills development and preparation for migration.

Discussion

Session Chair: Hon. Mohammed Alammadi, MP Bahrain

Participants

Some comments were raised that such dialogues between parliamentarians and stakeholders should continue. Given the limitation of time, Session Chair requested the participants to proceed to the discussion of the joint declaration.

Discussion and Adoption of the Joint Declaration

Session Chair: Hon. Mohammad Suliman Abrash, MP Syria

The objective of the document and its importance for the project activities were briefed by Ms. Ghada Diab, Manager of the Regional Parliamentarians Project in UNFPA ASRO.

Under the chairpersonship of Hon. Abrash, participants actively expressed their views and opinions, and then unanimously adopted the joint declaration.

Closing Session

Ms. Asma Kurdahi, Country Representative of UNFPA Lebanon

Ms. Kurdahi addressed the conference on behalf of the Regional Director of UNFPA ASRO. She said she welcomed the strategic partnership with parliamentarians and this meeting represented an opportunity to enhance the exchanges between Arab and Asian parliamentarians. The sharing of experiences and lessons learned was essential to the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and achievement of the SDGs.

These meetings would provide an opportunity to adopt collective measures to advance these goals, especially under the circumstances presented by the COVID-19 pandemic and the crises in the Arab regions. In this context, UNFPA depended on parliamentarians for assistance. Ms. Kurdahi said she was pleased that there had been an adoption of a roadmap marking the way forward.

Ms. Fadoua Bakhadda, Arab World Regional Director, IPPF

COVID-19 pandemic showed the vulnerabilities in the health sector in the Arab world and taught the countries that commitments cannot be achieved without mutual cooperation between governments, civil society and the private sector. Finally, without social and economic empowerment of women, there cannot be safe access in the health system.

Hon. Pierre Bou Assi, MP Lebanon

Hon. Bou Assi reminded delegates that success in social work was not like a refreshment machine – where you put in a coin and get something like a jackpot out. Addressing population and development issues takes time and patience. He said it was crucial that the parliament monitors the work of the government and makes ministers accountable for the work they are working on. Parliamentarians' role also involves allocating and monitoring the budget. Parliamentarians should ensure that legislation reflects the values of the society and protects the dignity of the citizens.

Day 2: Study Visit

The delegation visited the Governmental Quarantine Hospital located in the port of Beirut as the first place of visit. Mr. Michael Matar, Chair of the Board, and Ms. Karen Sakr, Director of the Hospital, welcomed the delegation and briefed them about the hospital.



The Hospital is under the Council for Development and Reconstruction (CDR) and Ministry of Health of Lebanon. This hospital accommodates children facing debilitating and life threatening medical and surgical conditions, refugees of victims of war and poverty. It was badly damaged during the 2020 blast and in need of reconstruction. Many NGOs and international financial institutions have been donating in order to speed up the reconstruction process.

Next, the Arab and Asian delegates visited St. Vincent de Paul NGO. This NGO has been serving and accompanying poor children around Lebanon. It also seeks forgotten individuals and families and offer practical help through personal contact. It has more than 800 members with 13 institutions across the country. The delegates visited three various centers of this NGO.



The delegates engaged in lively discussion with the administration of the NGO regarding daily activities and sustainability of their projects. After the briefing, the host side gave a tour inside the center so that the delegates had an opportunity to witness the actual operation of this NGO.

The third place of visit, which provides the elderly care, is also operated by St. Vincent de Paul NGO. In this place the Arab and Asian delegation were briefed on how the center cared about the abandoned elderly people.



The mobile care is provided to those who struggle to visit hospitals.

The last visit was in Handicapped Union of Chahtoul office of the St. Vincent de Paul NGO. This is an elderly care center. The administration of the institution briefed the delegates about daily operation, gave a tour inside the building and introduced them with activities that elderly people were engaged in. For example, the institution asked some of the elderly to look after chickens and once grown chickens start producing eggs the institution sells them to customers and pay the elderly people their percentage. With this, they involve elderly people in small business and entrepreneurship.



APPENDIX: Declaration

Inter-Regional Arab and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on ICPD25 March 23-24, 2021 Beirut, Lebanon

We, members of parliaments from the Arab region and Asia, participated in the Inter-Regional Arab and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on ICPD25 in Beirut, Lebanon, on 23-24 March, 2021, Bearing in mind that the implementation of the Nairobi Commitments on the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), or ICPD25 commitments, will be vital if we participate in the undertakings of sustainable development of our regions.

We welcome this meeting, which is the fourth cooperation between Arab and Asian parliamentarians working on the implementation of ICPD25, with a focus on the related issues.

We consider that this is a vital meeting for achieving sustainable development in Arab and Asian countries and for promoting Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) through regional exchanges.

Taking into account the outcomes of the regional reviews of ICPD25 commitments, the challenges encountered and recommendations, we have agreed as follows:

1. We recognize the progress that has been made since the ICPD in 1994 which was held in Cairo and since the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs);
2. We recognize the importance of the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 and its commitments to fulfil the pledges of ICPD;
3. We affirm that people constitute a society, and that without fulfilling the ICPD25 commitments, the SDGs will not be achieved;
4. We reiterate that, despite the progress made, the Programme of Action of the ICPD is still not completed in the regions, whereas the challenges facing the full implementation of the Programme of Action, including the ICPD25 commitments recently adopted, and the achievement of the SDGs by 2030 remain prominent;
5. We renew our commitments to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the ICPD25 commitments in the Arab and Asian regions, and the role of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in supporting the implementation of the ICPD agenda as a benchmark to guide governments in formulating their population policies and programmes;
6. We realize that population issues will not achieve great progress without social, economic and political development, taking into account the cultural dimensions of countries within the framework of sustainable development, which considers the environment as an integral component;
7. We are aware that the global situation has worsened as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, which has hindered the ICPD25 achievements. We draw everyone's attention that this pandemic has complicated conditions in many societies in relation to reproductive health (RH) and gender-based violence (GBV);

8. We call upon UNFPA to continue its work towards the full implementation of ICPD25 commitments and to capitalize on this momentum to develop policies and mobilize financial support to ensure that consensus is reached in order to achieve the full implementation of the ICPD25 commitments.

In line with our role as parliamentarians, we commit to the followings:

- Continue our advocacy for the full implementation of the ICPD agenda to provide sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services for all, as affirmed by the SDGs, being vital to achieving a vision of a world in which maternal deaths can be fully prevented, the unmet needs for family planning can be zero, GBV and harmful practices can be eliminated, and young people can live healthy and productive lives;
- Ensure stronger political commitments to continue implementing the ICPD Programme of Action and use our role as parliamentarians to urge governments to fulfil their commitments and to achieve the SDGs by 2030;
- Recognize that the promotion of social, agricultural and economic development and environmental protection can create a favorable condition for reproductive health and rights (RHR) for all;
- Call for mapping the legislative framework and identifying gaps and reforms to pave the way for the implementation of ICPD25 commitments;
- Advocate for increased national budgets from the perspective of ICPD25 commitments;
- Continue to advocate for the full implementation of ICPD25 commitments to end GBV and empower youth, as emphasized by the SDGs;
- Establish and support laws linking national constitutions to the ICPD agenda with perspectives on people's rights, health, education, economic planning and development;
- Emphasize the importance of investing in the potential of young people, as the main actors in relation to population, RH, gender equality, economic and social development, social and environmental protection, and encourage governments to create investment opportunities for youth;
- Identify ways to implement ICPD25 commitments at the national level and develop/adopt the necessary monitoring frameworks;
- Advocate for changing social norms, laws and policies, and supporting human rights, especially the most important reforms that promote gender equality and empowerment of women, girls and youth;
- Ensure that parliamentarians actively work in the regions with their governments at the national level to secure the necessary budgets and exert efforts to mobilize resources to ensure the implementation of ICPD25 commitments related to the "Nairobi work program" so as to complete the unfinished business;
- Work to deepen parliamentarians' understanding of population and sustainable development issues. Parliamentarians should enhance cooperation between regions in order to further revitalize their work, and actively defend their peers through national committees in their respective countries;

- Work with regional and global governments and fora to achieve and maintain peace and security within and across countries, in order to avoid the effects of occupation, armed conflicts, emergencies and humanitarian crises;
- Request UNFPA offices, donor countries and civil society organizations, especially the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), to cooperate with national committees and regional fora to implement the ICPD25 commitments.

APPENDIX: Programme

22 March 2021	
	Arrival of participants
23 March 2021 – Meeting Day 1 (Venue: Byblos Ballroom, Lancaster Tamar Hotel)	
08:40-09:00	Registration (Location: Lancaster Tamar Hotel, Tyr Meeting room)
09:00-09:30	Opening (Venue: Byblos Ballroom, Lancaster Tamar Hotel)
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Address by the Host Organization</i> Hon. Pierre Bou Assi, MP Lebanon 2. <i>Address by the Organizer</i> Hon. Teruhiko Mashiko, MP, Vice-Chair of JPFP, Member of APDA Board of Directors 3. <i>Address</i> Dr. Luay Shabaneh, Regional Director, UNFPA ASRO 4. <i>Address</i> Hon. Abdelhady Qasabi, MP Egypt, <i>address red by Hon. Talaat Abed Elkawi</i>, MP Egypt
09:30-10:00	Group Photo & Coffee Break
10:00-10:40	Session 1: The Importance of Implementation of ICPD25 Commitment and Impact of COVID-19
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Minister Plenipotentiary Tarek El-Nabulsi, Director of Development and Social Policies Dept. League of Arab States [20 min] 2. Hon. Pierre Bou Assi, MP Lebanon [20 min]
10:40-11:20	Discussion [40 min] Session Chair: Hon. Hon. Asem Araj , MP Lebanon
11:20-12:00	Session 2: Addressing Reproductive Health and Rights and Gender-Based Violence in the Arab Region
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hon. Souhail Alouini, MP Tunisia [20 mins] 2. Ms. Lina Sabra, Executive Director, Lebanese Association for family health-Salama [20 min]
12:00-12:40	Discussion [40 min] Session Chair: Hon. Khadija Elham , MP Afghanistan

12:40-13:50	Lunch (Location: Hotel Restaurant, Lancaster Tamar Hotel)
13:50-14:30	Session 3: Youth and Women Engagement in Addressing ICPD25 Commitments
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dr. Samar Haddad, President of Union Toward Civilized Society- Lebanon [20 mins] 2. Hon. Sami Fatfat, MP Lebanon (20 min)
14:30-15:10	Discussion [30 min] Session Chair: Hon. Mohammed Omer Arteh , MP Somalia
15:10-15:30	Session 4: Role of Parliamentarians in addressing the ICPD25 Commitments
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Hon. Amira Alser, MP Sudan [20 min] 2. Hon. Hon. Viplove Thakur, Former MP India [20 min]
15:30-16:00	Session Chair: Hon. Mohammed Alammadi , MP Bahrain
16:00-17:00	Discussion and Adoption of the Joint Declaration/Comminique Moderated by Ms. Ghada Diab , Manager, Regional Parliamentarians project, UNFPA ASRO Session Chair : Hon. Mohammad Suliman Abrash , MP Syria
17:00-17:40	Closing Session
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ms. Asma Kurdahi, Director of UNFPA Lebanon Country office UNFPA ASRO 2. Ms. Fadoua Bakhadda, Director, Arab World Regional Office 3. Hon. Pierre Bou Assi , MP Lebanon
24 March 2021 –Study Visit Day -2	
08:15-08:30	Meeting at the Lobby
08:30-09:00	Travel to Governmental Quarantine Hospital (Hospital damaged in August Explosion)
09:00-10:00	Briefing at Governmental Quarantine Hospital
10:00-10:30	Travelling to St Vincent De Paul NGO (School and children center)
10:30-11:00	Briefing at St Vincent De Paul NGO
11:00-12:00	Travelling Chahtoul “ Elderly Home “ (St Vincent De Paul NGO)
12:00-12:30	Travelling to Handicapped Union
13:00-14:00	Lunch at Traditional Lebanese Restaurant

14:00-14:30	Travel back to hotel
	Departure of participants
25 March 2021	
	Departure of participants

Organized by:

The Asian Population and Development Association (APDA)
The Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAPPD)

Supported by:

The Japan Trust Fund (JTF)
The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

In cooperation with

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)



APPENDIX: Participants List

Lebanon Meeting Participants' List				
MPs and National Committees on Population and Development				
1	Hon. Dr.	Khadija Elham	Afghanistan	MP
2	Hon.	Zober Abdali	Algeria	MP
3	Hon.	Mohammed Alammadi	Bahrain	MP
4	Hon.Dr.	Damry Ouk	Cambodia	MP
5	Hon.	Talaat Abed ElKawi	Egypt	MP
6	Hon.	Viplove Thakur	India	Former MP
7	Mr.	Manmohan Sharma	India	Executive Secretary, IAPPD
8	Hon.	Teruhiko Mashiko	Japan	MP; Vice-Chair of JPFP
9	Hon.	Abed Qaleq Azawi	Iraq	MP
10	Hon.	Suhair Al Qaryouti	Jordan	MP
11	Hon.	Ameed Khasawneh	Jordan	MP; Secretary-General of FAPPD
12	Hon.Dr.	Asmaa Zahrani	KSA	MP
13	Hon.	Pierre Bou Assi	Lebanon	MP
14	Hon.Dr.	Fadi Alameh	Lebanon	MP
15	Hon.Dr.	Assem Araj	Lebanon	MP
16	Hon.Dr.	Bilal Abdallah	Lebanon	MP
17	Hon.	Salaheddine Hadchity	Lebanon	MP
18	Hon.	Najib Harb	Lebanon	MP
19	Hon.	Elie Raffoul	Lebanon	MP
20	Hon.	Elyas Hankash	Lebanon	MP
21	Hon.	Naji El Kaddoum	Lebanon	MP
22	Hon.	Sami Fatfat	Lebanon	MP
23	Hon.	Noraini Ahmad	Malaysia	MP, Minister of higher education
24	Hon.	Sakal Dev Suthiyar	Nepal	MP
25	Hon. Dr.	Hamood Al Yahyaai	Oman	MP
26	Hon.	Fathi Abu Ardat	Palestine	MP
27	Hon.	Amina Kamel Sulaiman	Palestine	MP
28	Hon.	Amihilda Sangcopan	Philippines	Deputy Speaker, National Assembly
29	Ms.	Nenita Dalde	Philippines	PLCPD Secretariat
30	Hon.	Hector Appuhamy	Sri Lanka	MP
31	Hon.	Mohammed Arteh	Somalia	MP
32	Hon.	Amira Alsir Babeker	Sudan	MP
33	Hon.	Mohammad Suliman Abrach	Syria	MP
34	Hon.	Souhail Alouini	Tunisia	MP
35	Hon.	Azza Sulaiman	UAE	MP
36	Dr.	Tien Van Nguyen	Vietnam	Former MP
UNFPA & International Organizations				
37	Dr.	Luay Shabaneh	UNFPA	Regional Director, ASRO
38	Ms.	Ghada Diab	UNFPA	Project Manager, ASRO
39	Ms.	Asma Kurdahi	UNFPA	Director, Lebanon Country Office
40	Hon.	Tarek Nabulsi	Egypt	Director of Development and Social Policies Dept. League of Arab States
Parliament and Government				
41	Dr.	Samar Haddad	Lebanon	President of Union Toward Civilized Society (UTSC)
42	Ms.	Mirna Abou Jaoudeh	Lebanon	UTSC, protocol arrangement
43	Ms.	Jamila AlMir	Lebanon	UTSC, protocol arrangement
44	Mr.	Bachir Chebli	Lebanon	UTSC, protocol arrangement
45	Mr.	Hicham Hatchity	Lebanon	UTSC, protocol arrangement
46	Ms.	Antonella Lattouf	Lebanon	UTSC, protocol arrangement
47			Lebanon	Army representative
48			Lebanon	General Security Representative
49			Lebanon	State Security Representative
50			Lebanon	Interior Security Representative
51			Lebanon	Beirut Bar Association Representative
IPPF				
52	Ms.	Fadoua Bakhadda	Tunisia	Director, Arab World Regional Office
53	Mr.	Mustafa Kemayel	Tunisia	Assistant to Regional Director
54	Ms.	Lina Sabra	Lebanon	Executive Director of Lebanese Association for family health-Salama
Media and Observers				
55	Ms..		Lebanon	media, SBI channel
56	Ms.		Lebanon	media, MTV channel
57	Ms.		Lebanon	media, RLL channel
58	Ms.	Ywan	Lebanon	media
59	Ms.	Antoinette Jeajea	Lebanon	media
60	Mr.		Lebanon	Representative of Church
61	Mr.		Lebanon	Representative of Sunni Muslim mosque
62	Mr.		Lebanon	Representative of Shiah Muslim mosque
63	Mr.		Lebanon	Representative of disability community
64	Ms.		Lebanon	Representative of disability community
FAPPD Secretariat				
65	Dr.	Mohammad Al Smadi	Jordan	FAPPD Regional Coordinator
APDA				
66	Dr.	Osamu Kusumoto	Japan	Secretary-General; Executive Director
67	Ms.	Hitomi Tsunekawa	Japan	
68	Dr.	Farrukh Usmonov	Japan	
Interpreters				
69				Interpreter
70				Interpreter
71				Interpreter

