



**Arab and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting:  
Sexual and Reproductive Health and Resilience to Climate Change**

**Dubai, United Arab Emirates**

**19-20 January 2025**



## Day 1 (January 19, 2025)

### Introduction

On January 19, 2025, the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) and the Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAPPD) held a meeting in Dubai, the United Arab, with the support of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) and in cooperation with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The meeting was attended by representatives from 18 Arab, Asian, and Eastern European countries, as well as civil society organizations and experts. Discussions focused on pressing issues, including population growth, urbanization, migration, and climate change, with an emphasis on enhancing cooperation between Arab and Asian countries.



### Opening Session

- Facilitator:** Dr. Mohammed Al-Smadi, Secretary General of FAPPD
- Speakers:** Dr. Kiyoko Ikegami, Vice Chair and Secretary General of APDA  
Dr. Hala Youssef, UNFPA Advisor for Arab States  
Hon. Dr. Hamoud Al-Yahyai, MP Oman, President of FAPPD

The opening session set the general framework for the day's discussions, with key speakers presenting their insights on the challenges and opportunities in the region. The opening session was moderated by Dr. Mohammed Al-Smadi, Secretary-General of Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAPPD), who opened the session by welcoming the attendees to Dubai, highlighting the city's importance as a hub for regional cooperation. He pointed out FAPPD's successes in 2024, particularly the impactful initiatives implemented in Morocco, Egypt, and Bahrain. He noted FAPPD's efforts in addressing population and development challenges in the Arab region, considering them essential for achieving sustainable growth. Dr. Al-Smadi thanked the Government of Japan and Asian Population and Development Association (APDA) for their continued support in advancing the Forum's goals. In closing, he emphasized the importance of partnerships, noting that cooperation between Arab and Asian countries has been instrumental in effectively addressing shared challenges.

Dr. Kiyoko Ikegami, on behalf of the organizer, welcomed attendees, expressing gratitude to FAPPD and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Arab States Regional Office (ASRO) for their support in organizing the event. She also acknowledged the Japan Trust Fund (JTF), established by the Japanese government in 2000, for its continued support of parliamentarians working on population and development issues. Dr. Ikegami addressed the cascading global crises threatening human security and SDG progress, she noted that while climate change exacerbates vulnerabilities, sexual and reproductive health (SRH) is a fundamental human right often overlooked in environmental crises. Dr. Ikegami expressed hope that the meeting would lead to concrete actions, enhanced collaboration, and meaningful change.



Hon. Dr. Hamoud Al-Yahyai, President of FAPPD and MP from Omani, delivered a keynote speech. He emphasized the interconnectedness of population issues, climate change, and development, explaining that these are intertwined issues requiring collective action. He explained the moral responsibility to ensure



population well-being while protecting natural resources, stressing the importance of balancing human needs with environmental sustainability. Hon. Dr. Al-Yahyai called for adopting scientific solutions and strengthening regional partnerships to effectively address these challenges. In closing, he expressed hope that the Forum's efforts would serve as a catalyst for real change in the Arab region.

Dr. Hala Youssef, UNFPA Advisor for Arab States Regional Office, then delivered her speech, reaffirming UNFPA's commitment to supporting Arab parliamentarians in addressing population and development challenges. She emphasized the importance of integrating SRH into climate resilience strategies, noting that climate change disproportionately affects women and marginalized groups. She stressed the need for gender-inclusive policies and called for enhanced cooperation among all stakeholders to ensure no one is left behind in achieving sustainable development goals (SDGs).



## **Session 1: Sexual and Reproductive Health and Building Resilience to Climate Crises**

**Chair:** Hon. Hector Appuhamy, MP Sri Lanka

**Speakers:** Dr. Hala Youssef, UNFPA Advisor for Arab States Regional Office

Hon. Sri Wulan Sutomo, MP Indonesia

Hon. Dr. Ezzeldin Al-Tayeb, MP Tunisia

Dr. Hala Youssef, Advisor for UNFPA Arab States Regional Office, opened the session with a presentation on the profound impacts of climate change on gender-based violence (GBV), on SRH, and on youth in the Arab region. She highlighted key issues, noting that the Middle East and North African region is experiencing

temperature increases at twice the global average, exacerbating water scarcity, affecting 45% of agricultural land, and disrupting SRH services. She also emphasized the risks related to maternal and neonatal health caused by climate change, such as a 6% increase in miscarriages for every one-degree Celsius rise in temperature, and pointed to high maternal mortality rates in conflict zones. She also addressed the alarming rise in early marriages and GBV resulting from climate-related economic crises, with early pregnancy remaining a leading cause of death among adolescent girls.

Dr. Youssef highlighted the vulnerability of youth, including disruptions to education and healthcare due to climate disasters, while emphasizing opportunities for youth engagement through advisory councils, intergenerational dialogue, and advocacy training programs. However, she noted that only five out of 15 Arab countries include SRH or GBV in their nationally determined contributions (NDCs), while 11 countries address youth issues. In closing, Dr. Youssef presented best practices and recommendations for integrating SRH, GBV, youth, and gender dimensions into national climate policies. She called for enhanced youth participation, policy integration, and advocacy efforts to build a more inclusive and resilient response to climate challenges in the region.

Hon. Sri Wulan Sutomo, MP Indonesia, delivered a presentation titled “Addressing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Building Resilience to Climate Crises”, highlighting the unique challenges faced by Indonesia as an archipelagic nation with over 17,500 islands and a population of approximately 273 million. Given its high exposure to natural disasters—with 3,622 incidents recorded in 2019, mostly related to hydrometeorological phenomena—Indonesia faces significant climate-related risks, including threats to economic and food security, such as declining rice production, as well as widening social gaps that disproportionately affect the poorest communities. Hon. Sutomo emphasized the gender-specific challenges faced by women, including triple gender roles, high mortality rates in disasters, and limited access to clean water, which affects menstrual health, healthcare, and maternity. Climate-related emergencies also disrupt SRH services and human rights, increasing the risks of GBV and early marriage. To address these issues, she called for integrating gender into climate and disaster policies, enhancing public awareness through media campaigns, increasing women’s participation in policymaking, and empowering local women’s groups through community initiatives and health worker training.

Hon. Dr. Ezzeldin Al-Tayeb, MP Tunisia, concluded the session with a presentation on “Climate Change, Women, and Decision-Making”, emphasizing the vital role of parliamentarians in addressing the intersection of climate change, women’s health, and governance. He highlighted how climate-related diseases disproportionately affect women’s reproductive health, with malnutrition impacting fertility, while forced displacement and economic hardships reduce women’s financial independence. Hon. Dr. Al-Tayeb stressed the need for gender-responsive legislation and policies, including integrating a gender perspective into climate and development laws, and introducing quotas or incentives to promote women’s leadership.

He called for increased awareness and empowerment of women by training them in climate decision-making and increasing their representation in sustainable development. He also emphasized the role of parliamentarians in ensuring inclusive policy implementation. In closing, Hon. Dr. Al-Tayeb stressed that climate change is a multidimensional challenge linking the environment, health, and development, and that women's leadership is essential to effectively addressing these issues.



#### **Audience Interventions:**

The discussion included several key points related to climate challenges and proposed solutions, with a focus on youth participation and gender integration. Hon. Raul Daniel A. Manuel, MP Philippines, emphasized the role of local youth councils in addressing climate and population issues and posed a question to Indonesia regarding similar youth engagement models. Dr. Hala Youssef responded on behalf of Indonesia, highlighting regional and national programs, as well as private sector collaboration in disaster management.

Hon. Dr. Hamoud Al-Yahyai raised a question about the need for tangible global experiences and successful implementations rather than theoretical discussions. Dr. Hala Youssef emphasized the importance of national commitment, local and international cooperation, and sharing best practices to address the impacts of climate change.

Hon. Dr. Rida Shibli, representing Jordan, inquired about globally replicable climate initiatives. Dr. Hala Youssef acknowledged their existence but stressed that they are context-dependent and emphasized the need for global cooperation and improved data management.

The discussion also touched on the inclusion of men in climate programs, with the Nepali model suggesting that men should be involved in managing agriculture and household chores, promoting a holistic approach to interdependence in society. Basic needs were also highlighted, with food security and women's empowerment being prerequisites for addressing climate issues, calling for simple and actionable solutions. In conclusion, the importance of women was emphasized, with the phrase "women are everything" referring to their vital role in society, while also acknowledging the dual nature of technology and the need to ensure women's rights, prosperity, and security.

## **Session 2: Sustainable Financing for Sexual and Reproductive Health to Achieve the International Action Plan on Population and Sustainable Development Goals**

**Chair:** Hon. Abdul Hadi Al-Kasbey, Member of the Egyptian House of Representatives

**Speakers:** Hon. Elvira Surabaldieva, MP Kyrgyzstan

Hon. Abdellatif El Ansari, MP Morocco

Hon. Jelena Bekić, MP Bosnia and Herzegovina

Hon. Lana Preljeć, MP Bosnia and Herzegovina



Hon. Elvira Surabaldieva, MP Kyrgyzstan, opened the session with a presentation on "Sustainable Financing for Family Planning and SRHR Services", discussing the significant challenges in ensuring adequate funding for SRH in Kyrgyzstan. She highlighted the country's rapid population growth, high maternal and child

mortality rates, and significant unmet needs for family planning, with 22% of women lacking access to contraception and a contraceptive prevalence rate only at 15%. Limited media coverage of health budgets and weak civil society engagement also hinder efforts to improve SRH services. Hon. Surabaldieva emphasized that the lack of public funding exacerbates health inequalities, while increasing investment in family planning could improve maternal and child health outcomes and empower women. She called for enhanced parliamentary advocacy to secure budget allocations, increase access to services for high-risk women, and strengthen budget monitoring. She also urged the Ministry of Health to develop a transparent SRH budget plan and adopt a seven-year procurement strategy for contraceptives. In closing, she stressed the need for sustainable financing, exploring alternative funding mechanisms, and fostering stakeholder dialogue to ensure equitable access to SRH services.

Hon. Abdellatif El Ansari, MP Morocco, delivered a presentation on “Morocco’s Model of Social Protection and Healthcare Reform”, highlighting the country’s commitment to providing universal health coverage (UHC) as a fundamental human right under international law. Hon. El Ansari emphasized Morocco’s efforts to protect citizens’ health, particularly in response to the gaps revealed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which led to the enactment of Framework Law No. 09.21 on Social Protection to achieve universal coverage. He outlined key reforms aimed at strengthening the social state, including expanding the mandatory basic health insurance (AMO) to cover more beneficiaries and enhancing direct social support systems to reduce disparities in health and education. He also discussed healthcare system reforms, such as increased medical training and recruitment, foreign expertise integration, and the modernization of primary care networks and hospitals. Governance improvements included the establishment of oversight bodies like the Higher Health Authority and regional health groups, as well as the development of an integrated digital health information system to streamline hospital records and services. In closing, Hon. El Ansari emphasized that Morocco’s approach demonstrates how comprehensive social protection and healthcare reforms can align with the SDGs, offering a potentially replicable model for other countries.

Hon Jelena Bekić and Hon. Lana Preljeć, MPs Bosnia and Herzegovina, concluded the session with a joint presentation on “Balancing Religious and Social Pressures with Evidence-Based Health Policies”. They addressed the challenges of healthcare’s political dependency, raising concerns about the financial stability of health centers. They noted the influence of religious institutions, observing that there is resistance to sex education due to conservative norms. The representatives focused on gaps in public health education, noting that while vaccines are funded, broader health campaigns covering sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), cancer awareness, and climate-related health risks are still lacking, and social media content related to health is poorly regulated. They emphasized that the core challenge lies in reconciling religious and social



pressures with the need for evidence-based health policies, ensuring that public health strategies are scientific data-driven, while respecting cultural sensitivities.

#### **Audience Interventions:**

The discussion included several additional interventions addressing challenges and strategies related to health and GBV.

Hon. Dr. Abdelhady El Kasbey, MP Egypt, raised key points about the priorities of SRH and services to combat violence against women in Arab countries. He also inquired about integrating social protection measures into health insurance and highlighted challenges related to budget implementation, particularly in overcoming obstacles related to spending and issues overlooked during budget preparation.

A representative from Bahrain shared the country's 20-year experience in protecting women from violence and called for the exchange of experiences to create a "future roadmap" for combating GBV, which would save time and resources for countries without specific plans. The importance of using global indicators to measure progress in sustainable financing and climate initiatives was also emphasized, with a suggestion to use AI dashboards to display real-time data.

Hon. Abdellatif El Ansari, MP Morocco, discussed oversight mechanisms in his country, noting how the health sector is monitored by the Supreme Audit Institution and liquidation laws, while emphasizing the need for stronger on-the-ground oversight, particularly in reproductive health.

Hon. Hussain Shareef, MP Maldives, addressed several health and economic challenges, including difficulties related to universal insurance, the high prevalence of diabetes and hypertension, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the economy. Increased smoking and e-cigarette use among youth were also noted as growing concerns. The Maldives also requested support from international partners to address these issues.

### **Session 3: The Role of Parliamentarians in Building Resilience and Achieving the SDGs in the Face of Global Challenges**

**Chair:** Hon. Raoul Dannel A. Manuel, MP Philippines

**Speakers:** Hon. Rida Shibli, former MP Jordan

Hon. Abdul Khaliq Malik, MP Iraq

Hon. Muhammad Islahuddin bin Abas, MP Malaysia

Hon. Fakhry Abouelnaga, MP Egypt

Hon. Prof. Florin Bodog, State Counselor for Health at Prime Minister, Romania

Hon. Dr. Rida Shibli, former MP Jordan, opened the session with a presentation titled “The Role of Parliamentarians in Building Resilience and Achieving the SDGs”, emphasizing that resilience is the ability to endure shocks while maintaining essential functions. He highlighted the 17 SDGs as a comprehensive framework for eradicating poverty and protecting the planet. He also stressed the need to address climate change, health crises, economic instability, and social disruptions. Hon. Dr. Shibli emphasized the pivotal role of parliamentarians in advancing these goals through legislation, ensuring policy and budget alignment with the SDGs, and maintaining strong oversight to monitor progress and prioritize marginalized communities. He called for innovation, supporting investment in sustainable research and technology, and emphasized the importance of coordinating local and national strategies, urging collaboration with local governments to tailor SDG strategies to community needs. In closing, he stressed that resilience and legislative commitment are essential to ensure no one is left behind in the journey toward sustainable development.

Hon. Abdul Khaliq Malik, MP Iraq, delivered a presentation titled “The Role of Parliamentarians in Achieving the SDGs”, emphasizing the importance of sustainable diplomacy in promoting regional and international cooperation to protect the environment within the framework of the 17 SDGs. He highlighted the crucial role of parliamentarians in legislating and monitoring laws that support the SDGs, as well as their role as representatives of the people and raising public awareness. Hon. Malik called for enhanced international cooperation, urging Arab and Asian countries to share best practices, participate in UN initiatives, and strengthen cross-sector partnerships to address shared challenges. He also emphasized the impact of parliamentarians on national budgets, calling for increased investment in education, healthcare, and renewable energy while ensuring transparency and accountability in resource allocation. In closing, he stressed that parliamentary action and international cooperation are fundamental to advancing sustainable development and achieving long-term resilience.

Hon. Muhammad Islahuddin bin Abas, MP Malaysia, delivered a presentation titled “Building Resilience: A Malaysian Perspective”, focusing on four areas: climate resilience, strengthening health systems, promoting gender equality and renewable energy transition. Hon. Muhammad Islahuddin bin Abas emphasized the importance of parliamentarians’ roles in resilience, including legislation and policy advocacy that prioritize inclusive, sustainability and equity, empowering marginalized groups, and promoting accountability and oversight to ensure ethical and efficient use of public resources. He explained that Malaysia aimed to

achieve a 40% renewable energy mix by 2035, while Malaysia's MADANI Youth Economic Agenda focuses on reducing youth unemployment and fostering innovation.

Hon. Fakhry Abouelnaga, MP Egypt, delivered a presentation titled "Crisis Management, Energy Challenges, and National Resilience". He highlighted the growing need for robust crisis management strategies to address energy security, economic stability, and climate-related risks, emphasizing the importance of regional and international cooperation. Hon. Abouelnaga called for strengthened partnerships with international stakeholders to develop sustainable solutions and enhance national resilience. His discussion focused on the critical role of policymakers in effectively managing crises, promoting innovation, and ensuring long-term stability through strategic planning and collaborative efforts.

Hon. Prof. Florin Bodog concluded the session with a presentation titled "Sexual and Reproductive Health and Climate Change Adaptation Resilience", highlighting the interconnected challenges of accelerating climate change, emerging infectious diseases, and growing inequality. He emphasized the crucial role of parliamentarians as guardians of change, urging them to leverage legislative power to mobilize resources for both SRH services and climate change adaptation. Hon. Prof. Bodog explained how climate change disproportionately affects women, children, and marginalized groups, disrupting access to essential SRH services. He called for a focus on justice, adaptation, and development, advocating for investment in climate-resilient health systems and integrating SRH into disaster preparedness plans. In closing, he stressed the need for global cooperation, encouraging knowledge sharing, cross-border partnerships, and adopting a human rights-based approach in all legislative efforts to ensure sustainable and inclusive development.

#### **Audience Interventions:**

The discussion focused on parliamentarians' strategies to ensure emergency response efforts align with long-term health system strengthening. Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring universal access to SRH services as a cornerstone of sustainable healthcare, especially during crises. The discussion also highlighted the empowerment of women and youth as key factors in building resilient health systems, noting that inclusive policies are essential to meet the needs of marginalized groups. Attendees shared best practices for integrating SRH into emergency frameworks, prioritizing gender equality and effective youth participation in decision-making processes, aiming to build systems capable of adapting and enduring future challenges.



## Session 4: Discussion and Adoption of Parliamentary Recommendations

**Chair:** Hon. Dr. Hamoud Al-Yahyai, President of FAPPD, MP Oman

**Facilitator:** Dr. Mohammed Al-Smadi, Secretary-General of FAPPD

This session focused on adopting parliamentary recommendations. The draft parliamentary statement was thoroughly discussed, with an emphasis on reaffirming the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the SDGs as reference frameworks for achieving global health and development goals. Key points included implementing human rights-based approaches to address GBV, early marriage, and other harmful practices, with a strong call for South-South cooperation among parliamentarians to share knowledge and resources. The session also highlighted the importance of increased support for FAPPD and reaffirmed the pivotal role of UNFPA in advancing the goals of the ICPD and SDGs, stressing the need for continued cooperation and commitment from all stakeholders to ensure progress.

## Closing Session

**Speakers:** Hon. Dr. Hamoud Al-Yahyai, MP Oman, President of FAPPD

Dr. Kiyoko Ikegami, Vice Chair and Secretary General of APDA

Hon. Dr. Hamoud Al-Yahyai, President of FAPPD and MP Oman, expressed his gratitude to all participants and emphasized the importance of continued cooperation between Arab and Asian parliamentarians to address pressing issues, particularly in the areas of SRH and climate change adaptation. He stressed the significance of the meeting's outcomes, noting that the adopted recommendations would form an important step toward enhancing regional coordination and developing stronger, more sustainable policies and measures to address these challenges. The session reinforced the Forum's commitment to collective action and ensuring tangible progress toward shared goals.

Dr. Ikegami on behalf of the organizer echoed her appreciation to the participating parliamentarians and their contributions to active discussions on these important topics.





## Day 2 (January 20, 2025)

### Field Visit

On the second day, participants conducted a field study visit to several key institutions in Dubai, including the International Center for Bio saline Agriculture (ICBA), the Dubai Electricity and Water Authority (DEWA), and the Pakistan Association in Dubai. These visits provided valuable insights into sustainable agriculture, water resource management, and community-based healthcare services.





### **Organizers**

The Asian Population and Development Association (APDA)

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

### **Supporters**

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

The Japan Trust Fund (JTF)

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

## ***Arab and Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting on SRH and Climate Change Resilience***

**19 January 2025**

**Dubai, the United Arab Emirates**

### **Statement**

#### **Preamble**

Achieving the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action (PoA) and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and beyond is vital if we are to engage in development that is sustainable for our planet. This year presents an important opportunity to advance concrete action on the SDGs, ICPD PoA and climate change, with key events such as the Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD9) and Beijing+30.

In anticipation of this year, we Parliamentarians representing the 18 countries, have gathered in Dubai city, UAE, on 19 January 2025, to attend the Arab-Asian Parliamentarians' Meeting. We reaffirm our commitment to implement the ICPD PoA and achieve SDGs and beyond.

#### **Whereas:**

1. Parliamentarians' networks and activities on population and development clearly place population issues within the context of sustainable development and aim to build a society where people can live with dignity;
2. Political will is necessary for implementing the ICPD PoA and ensuring that no one is left behind. Parliamentarians have a role to play in giving shape that political will through lawmaking, budget allocation, oversight and monitoring of budgetary resources; and
3. Approaches to addressing population and sexual reproductive health (SRH) issues cannot be imposed upon individuals but must be based on their understanding and acceptance. As such, parliamentarians have an important role to play in creating a viable platform for community engagement.

We recommend to our fellow parliamentarians, national governments, the international community and civil society the following actions:

1. Without fulfilling the ICPD PoA, namely addressing population and development issues with a focus on SRH and human rights and choices, the SDGs will not be achieved;
2. Addressing population issues will require social, economic and political development, taking into account the cultural dimensions of countries within the framework of sustainable development, which includes the environment as an integral component;
3. To make the changing population dynamics an engine for social and economic development, there must be active and affirmative investment in youth and women in education, employment, SRH, participation, and social protection to mitigate the impacts of climate change, in accordance with the ICPD goals.
4. Countries without legislation for a human rights-based approach to prevent gender-based violence (GBV) should take concrete steps towards achieving best global practices. Such efforts will promote gender respect and improve the status of women and girls in societies;

5. As representatives of the people, parliamentarians should recognize the importance of the implementation of the ICPD PoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to achieve SRH and improve life of the population locally and globally;
  6. We strengthen South-South partnerships among parliamentarians and civil society representatives on the implementation of the ICPD PoA and 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development;
  7. We, the parliamentarians, renew our call to the governments of donor countries and international organizations to increase support for the Forum of Arab Parliamentarians for Population and Development (FAPPD) for its effective role in the Arab region, which suffers from political, social and economic turmoil.
  8. We call upon UNFPA to continue its work toward the full implementation of the ICPD PoA and SDGs, capitalizing on this momentum to develop policies, mobilize financial support, and accelerate the implementation and achievement of the ICPD and its PoA.
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