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## Women at the Center: Prioritizing women's rights and empowerment in Covid-19 pandemic response and recovery

### Manila, October 22-24 2022:

The regional meeting on Women at the Center: Prioritizing women's rights and empowerment in Covid-19 pandemic response and recovery was organized by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) and the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD), supported by the United Nations Fund (UNFPA) through the Japan Trust Fund (JTF). It brought together more than 70 participants from parliaments, governments, international organizations, youth organizations and academia, involving 18 countries, to share and discuss good practices in policies, legislation and programmes aimed at gender equality and women empowerment. The Meeting paid special attention to those

gender issues, including how to eliminate discrimination and prevent violence against women and girls, empower women and engage them in decision-making policies, and fulfill sexual and reproductive health, in the spirit of leaving no one behind.

Following extensive discussions and interventions during the working sessions, parliamentarians at the meeting collectively formulated 17 key recommendations. Notable among these recommendations is ensuring stronger political commitment to accelerate progress towards three critical goals: the elimination of preventable maternal deaths, the elimination of unmet need for family planning, and the elimination of gender-based violence and femicide (GBVF) and harmful practices. These efforts aim to ensure that all people, especially adolescents, can lead healthy and productive lives.

For more details please click [here](#).



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*In his opening statement, Hon. Prof. Takemi Keizo, Chair of AFPPD, emphasized the critical role of women's empowerment in achieving the goals of ICPD25 and the 2030 Agenda. He stressed that the sustainable development of any nation relies heavily on strategic investments, with a particular focus on the impact on women, girls and the elderly. He underlined the transformative potential of parliamentarians as catalysts for positive change and acknowledged the significant contribution of AFPPD in the region in addressing pressing gender issues.*



## Inauguration of IFPPD, Seminar on three zeros, and exchange programme on ASRH, and Gender

**Jakarta, 29-30 November 2022:**

International Seminar on three zeros (Ending Preventable Maternal Death, Ending Unmet- Need or Family Planning, and Ending GBV and Harmful Practices), and Exchange Programme on ASRH and Gender was organized in Jakarta on 29-30 November: The recent AFPPD event was a significant milestone, highlighting the inauguration of the IFPPD and a seminar on the crucial "three zeros": ending preventable maternal deaths, ending unmet need for family planning, and ending gender-based violence and harmful practices. This event was notable for the active involvement of youth and civil society, a rarity at AFPPD events.



In addition to the inauguration of the AFPPD, a remarkable MoU was signed between BKKBN, Indonesia's National Population and Family Planning Agency, and the IFPPD which indicates the necessity of pursuing the national-level activity supported by AFPPD to strengthen the role of the National Committees.

This event attracted a diverse audience, including government officials, NGOs and vibrant youth groups. The importance of youth was further highlighted through virtual visits to youth-focused centers, PIK-R (Youth Information and Counseling Centres) and Posyandu Remaja (Youth Integrated Services).

For more details please click [here](#).

## AFPPD Executive Committee Meeting (ExeCom)

Following the COVID-19 pandemic, the 93rd AFPPD ExeCom meeting marked a significant milestone as it was the first face-to-face meeting since 2020. It was held on 22 October 2022, as a hybrid event that took place both online and offline in Manila, Philippines, and was organized in partnership with the Philippine National Committee (NatCom). The meeting provided an opportunity for parliamentarians to come together, share insights, and discuss important issues related to population and development in the Asian region. The 93rd ExeCom became an important forum for members to address the continuing challenges of the pandemic and discuss strategies for sustainable development in a post-COVID world. The minutes of this meeting are available on the AFPPD website, offering a comprehensive overview of the discussions and decisions taken. These minutes serve as a valuable resource for those interested in the activities and goals of the organization.

- The 94th AFPPD Executive Committee Meeting was held in Tokyo, Japan, on 24 April 2023. This meeting had a special focus on gender, recognizing its paramount importance in the field of population and development

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#01 Group photo of participants  
#02 IFPPD members during the session  
#03 The moment of inauguration of IFPPD



## General Assembly of AFPPD 2023

The AFPPD General Assembly in Tokyo in 2023 marked a significant milestone for the organisation and its members. While this biennial event normally includes leadership elections, the unique circumstances of this Assembly, with the last election two years ago, meant that it focused primarily on shaping AFPPD's strategic direction. It also marked a return to face-to-face collaboration following the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, and underlined the commitment of AFPPD members to overcome these obstacles effectively. The Assembly played a crucial role in developing strategic plans and documents based on the collective insights of representatives countries. These documents will guide AFPPD's future efforts and will now be submitted to the Executive Committee (ExeCom) for validation to ensure alignment with the organisation's mission and goals. Overall, the 14th General Assembly reaffirmed the commitment of AFPPD members to addressing population and development-related issues in the Asian region.

The Assembly consisted of three sessions, each of which was integral to AFPPD's future initiatives. Session 1, which focused on the presentation and adoption of AFPPD's Strategic Plan for 2023-25, allowed member states to provide insights and comments for majority approval. Session 2 focused on discussions on the hosting of AFPPD Standing Committees and national level activities in 2024-2025, in line with the Strategic Plan. The agenda for Standing Committee meetings and regional conferences was shared, and Member States were invited to consider hosting these events. Finally, session 3 featured Member State presentations, with each country giving a brief 10-minute overview of their efforts to address key population issues in line with AFPPD's three pillars. In the end, the strategic plan was approved by the majority and adopted. For more detail, please click [here](#).

#01 A photo documenting the attendees of the AFPPD General Assembly, with some individuals joining online, although their virtual participation is not depicted in the image.

## AFPPD Executive Committee Meeting (ExeCom)

Gender equality and women's empowerment were considered critical components of sustainable development, and AFPPD was committed to addressing these issues. In addition to gender issues, the 94th ExeCom also addressed aging and youth, important aspects of population dynamics that required attention and proactive policies to ensure a balanced and prosperous society. As with previous meetings, the proceedings of the 94th ExeCom is available on the AFPPD website, allowing interested parties to access valuable insights and updates on the organization's ongoing efforts.

- The 95th AFPPD Executive Committee Meeting took place in New Delhi, India, on 22 August 2023. As with previous meetings, the minutes of the 95th ExeCom is available on the AFPPD website.

For more detail, please click [here](#).

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Workshop on  
Youth Empowerment: Education, Employment  
and Reproductive Health and Rights  
February 2023, Phnom Penh, Kingdom of Cambodia



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### Workshop on Youth Empowerment Education, Employment, and Sexual and Reproductive health and Rights

PHNOM PENH, 27 February: AFPPD convened a major workshop in the Kingdom of Cambodia entitled "Empowering Youth: Education, Employment and Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights". Hon. Men Sam An, Deputy Prime Minister of Cambodia and President of CAPPD, opened the workshop by highlighting the importance of raising awareness of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) among youth and marginalised groups. Ensuring their future development, including education, employment and social contribution, was a key concern. It highlighted key components of the "National Policy on Cambodia's Youth Development 2022-2026", which includes education, health, employment and institutional cooperation. Key areas promoted including youth volunteerism, entrepreneurship and cultural,

social and environmental awareness. The workshop generated several recommendations, including the need for dynamic digital technology mechanisms to enhance cooperation in the development of youth and marginalized groups. In addition, the outcomes of the seminar should inform localized policy and legal instruments. There was strong support for continued collaboration between legislative institutions to strengthen parliamentary oversight of policy implementation, particularly in the areas of youth education, employment and SRHR.

In the opening remark, Hon. Prof. Takemi has mentioned that youth empowerment is one of the key pillars that AFPPD is working on. In fact, youth represent more than half of the world's population, so there is a need to ensure opportunities for young people. Although significant progress has been made in promoting health, education and employment, nearly half of young people in the region face economic insecurity, either unemployed or employed, due to structural barriers, including cultural norms, which are reinforced by the COVID 19 pandemic. Hon. Professor Takemi highlighted that AFPPD has a critical role to play in addressing youth issues by encouraging Member States to adopt relevant laws and policies on decent employment,



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leadership and entrepreneurship among young people. In the closing remark, Hon. Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, Senator from Thailand, Secretary General of AFPPD, noted that the importance of youth and youth issues has brought about this workshop on youth empowerment, and the open discussions have provided the views and perspectives of professionals and academics from both government and private sectors to address the challenges and pave the way for solutions to empower youth. Other MPs from Asia attended online too and made presentations. Hon. Dede Yusuf, MP Indonesia, Chair of AFPPD, Hon. Lisa Chesters, MP Australia, Hon. Raoul Manuel, MP Philippines.



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For more detail, please click [here](#).



## ICPD30: Policymaking Initiatives to Address National and Regional Population Trends

**New Delhi, 22 August 2023:**

ICPD30, co-hosted by AFPPD and IAPPD, proved to be a momentous event this year. This important meeting coincided with India overtaking China to become the world's most populous nation. Prof. P.J. Kurien, Chairperson of IAPPD, highlighted India's burgeoning population, especially its large youth population, and emphasized the importance of promoting positive attitudes and behaviors in youth development. Hon. Prof. Keizo Takemi, MP Japan and Chair of AFPPD, discussed the significance of the workshop. He noted India's role as host of the G20 and its influence in shaping AFPPD's contributions to the G20. He highlighted AFPPD's success in organizing meetings of member states that resulted in important declarations.



Ms. Andrea W. Wojnar, UNFPA's Executive Director for India and Bhutan, championed the cause of ensuring reproductive rights and choices for all, echoing the enduring message of the 1994 Cairo ICPD, which remains relevant in 2023, placed a strong emphasis on women's rights as human rights and highlighted the need to address violations such as early and forced marriage, spousal violence, unmet family planning needs, unwanted pregnancies and unsafe abortions as critical steps towards achieving gender equality and women's empowerment, in line with the goals of the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Hon. Deepender Hooda, MP India and Vice-Chair of AFPPD, outlined the main objective of ICPD30: to facilitate dialogue between Indian parliamentarians, AFPPD, the Executive Committee, ExCom members, UNFPA and civil society ahead of the G20 Summit. Other MPs from Asia attended and made presentations too. Hon. Hector Appuhamy, MP Sri Lanka, Hon. Dil Kumari Rawal Thapa, MP Nepal, and Hon. Josephine Veronique Lacson-Noel, MP Philippines are examples.

For more details please click [here](#).

## Strategic Plan of AFPPD

AFPPD has adopted three key documents to guide its activities: the Resource Mobilisation Plan, the Strategic Plan and the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Plan. The Strategic Plan aims to promote the involvement of parliamentarians in addressing population issues in Asia and the Pacific, with a focus on women's empowerment and gender equality, youth engagement and active ageing, while also considering climate change as a cross-cutting issue. It outlines three critical programme-wide outcomes, ranging from aligning national legislation and budgets with the SDGs and ICPD+25, to influencing regional and global intergovernmental agendas on population issues. At the same time, the resource mobilisation strategy, which is closely aligned with the strategic plan, uses a four-pronged approach that includes building organisational capacity, sustaining and strengthening partnerships, diversifying funding sources, and creating external value. These outcomes work in synergy, with the diversification of funding sources dependent on the successful implementation of the previous steps. In addition, the M&E plan plays a crucial role in assessing the AFPPD's progress throughout the year to ensure that its goals and objectives are being met. For more details please click [here](#).