



Report of the

**Visit to the Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka,
Visit to the Parliament of Sri Lanka, and
National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting**

*9 October 2017
Colombo, Sri Lanka*



**From
the People of Japan**



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Sri Lanka Forum of Parliamentarians on Population
and Sustainable Development

ASIAN FORUM OF PARLIAMENTARIANS ON POPULATION
AND DEVELOPMENT (AFPPD)

REPORT

VISIT TO THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA,
VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA, AND
NATIONAL COMMITTEES STRATEGY PLANNING MEETING

9 October 2017
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Printed and distributed by AFPPD
December 2017
Bangkok, Thailand

Not for sale

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Participants of the AFPPD 12th General Assembly and the members of the Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka, 9 October 2017, Colombo, Sri Lanka (Photo: AFPPD)

The contents of this report were based on the presentations, speeches and remarks made by the participants during the Visit to the Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka, Visit to the Parliament of Sri Lanka, and National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting, and do not necessarily reflect the positions of the Forum.

Visit to the Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka

Welcome address

- Mr. Kavin Bihara Muhandiramge, Minister of International Youth Solidarity in the Youth Parliament

Mr. Kavin Bihara Muhandiramge welcomed all participants to observe proceedings of the Youth Parliament, explaining that Sri Lanka is debating its new constitution, and 125 young people are currently serving as members of the Youth Parliament.

Objectives of the Youth Parliament



Mr. Sachinda Dulanjana Witharana, Speaker of Youth Parliament, explained the purpose of the Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka, including its composition, as well as participation in policy making. (Photo: AFPPD)

- Mr. Sachinda Dulanjana Witharana, Speaker of Youth Parliament

Mr. Sachinda Dulanjana Witharana noted that the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament was established in 2010 by the Prime Minister, with the goal of raising youth participation in national politics and supporting community development. He noted that participation in the Youth Parliament advances youth leadership experiences, understanding, and knowledge. He reported that up to 160 delegates are elected to participate from among youth club members, and they serve terms of 1.5–2 years. The age range of participants is from 18 to 28 years.

Mr. Witharana also reported that Youth Parliament members have been involved in policy making for infrastructure development, education, and entrepreneurship, and through this work, the members gain experience in representing the needs and voices of their communities. He also noted that future projects before the Youth Parliament will include more cultural exchanges and diplomatic representation.

Opening address

- Mr. W.G.S. Erandika Weliange, Attorney-at-Law, Chairman/Director General of National Youth Services Council

Mr. W.G.S. Erandika Weliange noted that Sri Lanka has a rich history of democracy, and is considered one of the oldest democracies in Asia. He also noted that all citizens must be active in a democracy, and young people must be included in decision making. He further explained that youth clubs in Sri Lanka empower thousands of youth, and he expressed a desire to continue to strengthen the relationship with AFPPD.

- Hon. Mr. Dilan Perera, State Minister of Highways

Hon. Mr. Dilan Perera opened his remarks by explaining to participants that the proposal he made in Bishkek for the General Assembly to visit the Youth Parliament was now being successfully implemented, and he expressed hope that the delegates and member countries could learn from one another to guide youth in becoming future MPs. Hon. Mr. Perera wished the Youth Parliament a fruitful debate, and noted that the National Parliament will be debating the new constitution on 31 October and 1 November. He closed his remarks by thanking AFPPD for joining and strengthening the working relationship.

- Hon. Ms. Ann Sudmalis, MP Australia and Vice Chairperson, AFPPD

Hon. Ms. Sudmalis, MP recognized the achievements of the Sri Lankan youth participating in the Youth Parliament and noted that this experience was inspiring her to support the creation of a Youth Parliament in Australia as well. In particular, she congratulated the female youth MPs and called for more women's participation in politics. She also noted that all nations should focus on gender equality and women's empowerment, and she called on male MPs to support women in their participation. She closed her remarks by noting that the youth are the potential of their country.

Inauguration of debate

- Mr. J.N.G. Namal Pranith Jayamanne, Entrepreneurship, National Policies and Economic Affairs in the Youth Parliament: *Suggestions for the New Constitution of Sri Lanka*

Mr. J.N.G. Namal Pranith Jayamanne inaugurated the debate, where Youth Parliament members raised numerous issues related to the adoption of the new constitution. They discussed providing more opportunities for Tamils to be integrated and given self-determination. Proposals were also made to re-design the national flag to represent all Sri Lankans, ensure the election of provincial council members, increase women's political participation, and establish a youth quota in the National Parliament. Issues of religious pluralism were raised, as well as issues of mitigating the executive power and possibly even abolishing the Presidency, as well as moving away from the Roman-Dutch legal system.



The Youth Parliament of Sri Lanka debated on various issues related to the adoption of the new constitution. (Photo: AFPPD)

Vote of thanks

- Mr. Thilina Prasad Weerasekara, Leader of the Opposition of Youth Parliament

Mr. Thilina Prasad Weerasekara thanked all AFPPD delegates and participants for attending the Youth Parliament, and for observing its procession.

Visit to the Parliament of Sri Lanka

Introductory remarks

- Hon. Mr. Thilanga Sumathipala, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Hon. Mr. Thilanga Sumathipala welcomed the participants and opened the session by noting Sri Lanka's commitment to the Sustainable Development Agenda. He noted that the Sri Lankan Parliament has established a Select Committee for the SDGs—which he believes is the first such Parliamentary Committee in the world specifically addressing the SDGs. He also noted Sri Lanka's commitment to aligning its budget to the SDGs. The Hon. Deputy Speaker also noted that one of Sri Lanka's specific human development achievements has been the increased life expectancy, which is now above 70 years of age. However, this also requires a need to re-visit the retirement age, which is currently at 55. He noted the importance of looking to the policies of other more aged countries in the region to address this challenge in Sri Lanka. In addition to ageing policies, Sri Lanka is also addressing the role of youth through supporting the youth parliament and giving them a credible voice in the society. He also celebrated the recent 25% quota for women imposed at local government levels as an opening for increasing women's participation in all parts of society.

Welcome address

- Hon. Mr. Karu Jayasuriya, Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka

Hon. Mr. Karu Jayasuriya warmly welcomed all participants to the meeting, congratulating them on a successful conference, and thanking the AFPPD and the SLPPD for hosting the conference in Sri Lanka. He also recognized the funding support of UNFPA and the Government of Japan for the conference events.

Hon. Mr. Jayasuriya noted that AFPPD has been instrumental in bringing population and development issues to the forefront of national policy making, especially for the health of women and girls throughout their life cycle. He further noted that, due to the increased visibility of population issues, we have also been able to see increasing financial commitments made to addressing them. He also noted that Parliamentarians play a crucial role in achieving the SDGs at the national level, and presented the example of the Sri Lankan Parliament in being the first parliament to establish a separate committee on the SDGs. He further noted the Sri Lankan Parliament's commitment to youth and women's empowerment, and are hoping to adopt a measure to reserve 25% of seats for women in Parliament. Hon. Mr. Jayasuriya noted that population issues and sustainable development are closely connected, and actually enable democratic changes. He urged parliamentarians to take up the task of advocating for these important changes as they have a crucial role in pursuing human development and achieving sustainable development in their countries.

Hon. Mr. Jayasuriya urged participants to recognize that quality education, skills development, health, and decent work can power human development. He also noted that demographic changes affect human development. For example, increasing numbers of people in the workforce, the availability of better health and education, and diverse opportunities for decent work are part of the landscape of sustainable development. While Asian nations go through demographic shifts, he urged his fellow parliamentarians to keep these dynamics in mind when formulating policies, noting that many of the world's most populous countries are from the Asia region, and China, India and Indonesia alone make up approximately 40% of the world's population. While some

Asian nations are experiencing a youth bulge, others are ageing rapidly, while others are in the midst of the demographic dividend. While the world's population will grow by another billion people in the next 30 years, he noted that this is a time of great challenges, but also great opportunities. Making the most of demographic transitions, providing opportunities for decent work will be fundamental. However, without fully unleashing the power of women, the effects of the demographic dividend will be marginal at best. While the Asia-Pacific region has made considerable progress in human development, he noted that it is still lagging behind some other regions. However, closing these gaps is within reach if we harness the demographic dividend and large number of working age people in our region today.



Hon. Mr. Karu Jayasuriya, Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, welcomed the participants and congratulated them for the successful conduct of the AFPPD 12th General Assembly. (Photo: AFPPD)

Q&A discussion

Hon. Ms. Ann Sudmalis, MP (Australia) opened the discussion by noting that the Youth Parliament members gave many constructive suggestions relevant to the constitutional reform process, noting in particular that one young woman spoke about changing women's representation in the constitution. She asked the panelist how such suggestions would be addressed.

The Honourable Speaker responded that, in Sri Lanka, the national government is committed to relying on youth for the future. He noted that, just two weeks ago, the Parliament adopted a measure to guarantee women's representation in local councils, and they are also making efforts to extend this guarantee to the National Parliament as well. The Honourable Speaker noted that the Youth Parliament is considered a training ground, and youth members would be nominated to and from the existing political parties.

Hon. Mr. Dilan Perera (Sri Lanka) added that women are now assured 25% of seats on local councils, and this new legislation assures actual representation of women on the local and provincial councils.

The Honourable Speaker added that Sri Lanka produced the world's first woman prime minister. However, he noted that a major challenge faced in increasing women's participation was that women do not come forward to stand for elections, although he noted that this trend was changing. He also noted that women often fail to vote for women candidates.

Dr. Mika Marumoto, Executive Director (AFPPD) noted that the General Assembly had been successful thanks to the efforts of Hon. Dissanayake and Hon. Perera, who participated in our meeting in Bishkek, and contributed to discussions of radicalization of youth and other youth issues. Hon. Perera recommended in Bishkek that the General Assembly visit the Youth Parliament in Sri Lanka, and all national committees in attendance agreed to try to launch Youth Parliaments in their own countries.

Hon. Mr. Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu, MP (India) noted the enthusiasm of Sri Lankan democracy in attaining the human development and attaining the SDGs. He noted that, Sri Lanka's separate committee for SDGs has made an impression on participants, as well as the Social Empowerment Ministry. He commended Sri Lanka for these efforts, noting that they will have relevance for years to come.

Hon. Dr. A.F.M. Ruhul Haque, MP (Bangladesh) asked panellists to comment on whether representatives in the Youth Parliament are divided politically, and whether they are actually integrated into national politics.

The Honourable Speaker confirmed that there are many active political parties in both the Youth Parliament and the National Parliament.

Hon. Dr. Abdolreza Azizi, MP (Iran) noted that democracy is alive in Sri Lanka, although before he arrived for the General Assembly, he had very little information about the country. However, he expressed particular notice of the fact that about 98% of the population is literate, and how busy and active the people are. He also noted that the vulnerability in the society is very low. He also found the Youth Parliament very interesting. He also expressed his thanks to the AFPPD Secretariat staff, and looked toward continued opportunities to exchange ideas and work together as Asian nations to establish democracy and exchange experiences and ideas about older people and youth in particular. He also expressed his hope that every politician in the room would work to help the people of Myanmar, who are oppressed and facing extremely inhuman conditions.

Hon. Mr. Nidup Zangpo, MP (Bhutan) thanked the panellists for hosting the General Assembly participants at the Parliament hall, and also expressed his interest in the Youth Parliament in particular. He asked panellists to comment on how final and binding the talks of the Youth Parliament are and whether any of the resolutions being adopted were being aligned with the decisions of the national parliament.

Hon. Mr. Dilan Perera responded that in Sri Lanka, the constitution-making process started about one and a half years ago, when the Parliament decided that the entire Parliament would sit as a Constituent Assembly. This Constituent Assembly has appointed a steering committee composed of all political parties, which appointed 6 sub-committees to take the debates and discussions to the people in all the districts. The steering committee considered issues such as the nature of the state, electoral reforms, and devolution of authority, and submitted a report to the entire Constituent Assembly just one month ago. This report will be part of the debates at the end of October. During those debates, the Constituent Assembly will also be considering the debate at

the Youth Parliament from today. He also noted that, before the Youth Parliament discussed constitutional reform, one of their committees took this issue to villages in order to get their ideas and support. While the Parliament is not bound to take the Youth Parliament's discussions into consideration, it does consider their decisions.

Hon. Mr. Masood Rezaei, MP (Iran) noted that the freedom of expression and active political parties, as well as social freedom are at the heart of democracy, and he has noted that all these elements are particularly active in Sri Lanka. He particularly enjoyed the Youth Parliament, and wanted to know from the panellists how the National Parliament would address opposition from the Youth Parliament.

The Honourable Deputy Speaker responded by noting that the representatives of the Youth Parliament had been chosen by 342 youth clubs, which come under decentralized levels of government. He noted that the youth deliberations are also happening at these decentralized levels, and the representatives in the Youth Parliament bring the views from their local areas to the Youth Parliament. He noted that, in this sense, the Youth Parliament's debates and process were extremely helpful for the National Parliament for understanding better the views of all people, and it would be in the National Parliament's interest to consider all those views and decisions.

Hon. Mr. Sahibzada Muhammad Yaqoob, MP (Pakistan) noted that he was very impressed by the attempts being made in Sri Lanka to give status and rights to women and youth, as well as the harmony he has observed between the government and opposition parties. He also noted that the development of Sri Lanka is very impressive, and the Youth Parliament in Sri Lanka is a model for the whole world. He noted that all he had learned a lot from the Youth Parliament and would try to establish it in his own country as well.

The Honourable Deputy Speaker thanked Hon. Yaqoob for his remarks and noted that the debate hall for the Youth Parliament has been designed similarly to the hall for the National Parliament to create cross-over and instil importance to the debates of the Youth Parliament.

Hon. Mr. Seyed Ali Zahir Moulana, MP (Sri Lanka) added to the discussion of respecting youth debates by noted that, as Sri Lanka is in a post-conflict situation, where youth actually took up arms in his region, it will be especially important to mainstream youth into national politics to give them a voice and an outlet. He noted that, when he was elected to the Parliament, and when he travelled to his home district, his own vehicle was attacked and he even lost a relative. He noted that at this time, the country was fortunate to have eradicated the arms struggles, and he noted that the Youth Parliamentarians were coming from the northeast of the country as well and participating actively in the democratic process. He noted that this experience has showed the national government that it is really not in their interests to go against or ignore youth.

Hon. Ms Shukria Eisa Khel, MP (Afghanistan) noted that Afghanistan is still facing war and terrorism, and she herself was injured in a terrorist attack. She expressed her understanding of the conditions faced by people living in conflict areas, and she noted her happiness in seeing that Sri Lanka had returned to normal life and was continuing to develop after coming out of a conflict situation. She also noted that she was happy to see young women working in Sri Lanka. She closed her remarks by expressing a hope that Afghanistan will be free from terrorism one day and looked forward to sharing experiences with Sri Lankan MPs about how they have become free from terrorism.

National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting

Opening remarks

- Mr. Arthur Erken, Director, Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)



Mr. Arthur Erken, Director, Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), highlighted the importance of the National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting to develop concrete work plans towards the achievement of ICPD PoA and SDGs. (Photo: AFPPD)

Mr. Arthur Erken opened his remarks by looking forward to the coming session as an opportunity to develop work plans to actually achieve the ICPD PoA and the SDGs. He noted the important role Parliamentarians have played as essential partners in achieving these goals, and UNFPA looks to the leadership and passion of Parliamentarians to advance the mandate of ICPD. Mr. Erken also reiterated UNFPA's three specific transformative results to happen by 2030: 1) to end the unmet need for family planning, as currently over 200 million women worldwide have no access to family planning; 2) to see zero maternal deaths, while currently around 800 women per day die in childbirth-related causes; and 3) to address gender-based violence, where currently around 1/3 of women are subjected to GBV in their lifetimes. Specifically, with gender-based violence, Mr. Erken looked to men to stand up and say they will no longer submit their partners to violence.

Mr. Erken also noted that the UNFPA and AFPPD plans are complementary to the SDGs, and together he believed these organizations can support the work of Parliamentarians in leaving no one behind, especially in the Asia region, representing almost 2/3 of the world's population. Mr. Erken also looked to parliamentarians to be advocates for women and young people, as well as the elderly in the rapidly ageing Asia-Pacific region. He also thanked the participants for their dedication and hoped to create actionable strategic plans in the next session, which will be a way to ensure the SDGs are reflected in national budgets. He also encouraged participants to consider how they can create the framework for businesses and civil society to advance gender equality and rights of women and girls. In closing, he thanked Parliamentarians for their leadership and

called upon them to recognize that the lives of millions of our fellow human beings can be shaped by their actions on the road to 2030.

- H.E. Mr. Bryce Hutchesson, Australia's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka



H.E. Mr. Bryce Hutchesson, Australia's High Commissioner to Sri Lanka, stressed the critical role of partnerships in realizing the SDGs. (Photo: AFPPD)

H.E. Mr. Bryce Hutchesson opened his remarks by noting the partnership between the Australian government and the AFPPD, in particular reforms relating to gender inequality. He specifically noted the role of networks and relationships, as well as informal engagement facilitated by AFPPD as an important part of this work. He recalled for participants the critical role of partnerships in realizing the SDGs, and how with collaborative efforts and the convening of regional groups, the SDGs can be realized. He also noted with appreciation the AFPPD's role in raising awareness around gender equality and VAW, and encouraged the continuation of that work. As part of supporting gender equality and combating VAW, SRHR must also be addressed as the high number of maternal deaths each day is inexcusable in this day and age. H.E. Mr. Hutchesson also thanked the AFPPD for its contribution to evidence-based policy making in the region and the resources it provides in this regard, playing a unique role in the region, well-positioned to make a major impact on policy.

Agenda setting

- Ms. Seema Gaikwad, Policy Research and Advocacy Advisor, AFPPD

Ms. Seema Gaikwad thanked delegates for their participation in the events so far, and explained that the discussion about how to collaborate with our partners would now be continuing. She noted that the objectives in the other remaining sessions would be to revisit the commitments made at the National Committee sub-regional strategy meeting held in March, and to share the progress made in the past few months. She explained to participants that AFPPD hoped to prepare a draft work plan for 2018 to share with partners, donors, and other stakeholders at the national and sub-regional levels, and to engage and communicate better to achieve better policy results.

Ms. Gaikwad then showed a slide noting the commitments made at the National Committee meeting in March, which was broken down by region. South Asia Committees noted the importance of addressing trafficking and forced labour, drug use among youth, and climate change; the Committees in Southeast Asia identified gender equality and women's empowerment, adolescent pregnancy, and quotas for women's political participation as key issues; the Central Asia Committees identified sexual and reproductive health and rights, adolescent reproductive health, cervical cancer prevention, and ageing issues as the most relevant; the Pacific Committees identified mock parliaments for women and youth, domestic violence prevention, education to employment, and national development planning as key issues.

Ms. Gaikwad also showed a slide of activities in the past 6 months with National Committees. These included two National Committee strategy meetings, this 12th General Assembly meeting, national level workshops in Lao and Sri Lanka, and the reactivation of two National Committees in Sri Lanka and Iran. She also reported on the awarding of small grant funds to build and enhance the capacities of National Committees, and she reported that 9 small grants had been implemented this year. She further noted that the Secretariat has been gathering data on the national level to complete the fact sheets. In terms of partnerships, Ms. Gaikwad reported that the Secretariat has been working with European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and the World Bank-IMF parliamentary network, as well as UNESCAP in order to address ageing and other ICPD issues, while at the same time working to strengthen AFPPD's own capacity as a Secretariat.

Partner presentations

- Mr. William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia



Mr. William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia, presented on some of the major trends of migration in the Asia-Pacific region. (Photo: AFPPD)

Mr. William Gois opened his remarks by noting the numerous connections that can be drawn between the work of the AFPPD and the participating MPs and his organization working on migration issues in Asia. He noted that migration was omitted from the MDGs, but is now represented in four of the SDGs. He also noted the key role of the media in highlighting the migration crisis in recent years, and in the September session of the UN General Assembly (UNGA)

last year, the delegates finally agreed to adopt a global compact on migration and refugees. The UNGA gave itself one year to come up with two compacts—one on refugees and the other on migrants. Mr. Gois explained that his presentation would focus on the global compact on migration, as well as providing additional information on labour migration. He noted that this was a once in a lifetime moment to focus on migration now that the UNGA has committed to working on the issue, so this makes it a good time to also work on migration on the national level.

The UNGA Declaration on Migrants and Refugees set forth a timetable to develop a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework. The 1st phase from May to October 2017 is the consultation phase, including more than 60 meetings at the international level. December 2017 is the stocktaking phase, to be held in Mexico, which is expected to include the first draft of the global compact on migration. From February – July 2018, the intergovernmental negotiations on the compact will take place to negotiate the final version of the global compact. Six thematic discussions will be happening under the discussions on the global compact on migration: 1) human rights of migrations, social inclusion, discrimination and racism; 2) irregular migration; 3) international cooperation in migration matters; 4) contributions of migrants; 5) addressing drivers of migration; and 6) smuggling of migrants and trafficking in persons.

Mr. Gois also reported that a UNESCAP meeting will occur in November in Bangkok, which is the first time the governments of Asia will come together to discuss the Asia-Pacific contribution to the global compact on migration. He noted that the Rohingya issue is likely to be on the table of discussion as it has recently been categorized as a crime against humanity and ethnic cleansing. This compact is likely to be non-binding, but could include an operational framework like an SDG format where there will be commitments and a monitoring and implementation framework. The Asia-Pacific region has the biggest number of migrants and refugees worldwide, so it is important for our region to weigh in on this conversation at the international level.

Mr. Gois then turned to the issue of labour migration in Asia, focusing on South Asia and Southeast Asia. He noted that the Bali Process focuses on transnational crime, and is a tiered process which so far has not come to any concrete outcomes on migration itself. He did note that the Rohingya issue could be brought up through the Bali process. He reported that APEC has also discussed migration, but mostly in terms of highly-skilled migration. He also mentioned ASEAN, SAARC, the Abu Dhabi Dialogue, and the Colombo Process as active migration compacts, noting that many of the AFPPD member countries are engaged in up to three of these processes, amounting to 20+ countries from the Asia region involved in four major inter-governmental processes on migration.

Mr. Gois also provided information on some of the major trends of migration in the region. He noted that the Gulf region is the preferred destination for South Asian migrants. He reported that Japan is currently experiencing labour demographic issues, and is in need of a reformed labour-migration policy to fill gaps in the economy, although it has accepted some migrant workers in preparation for hosting the Olympics. Indian migrants are the most common in the UAE, and Qatar has accepted a number of Asian migrant workers in preparation for hosting the World Cup. He noted that in Jordan, Syrian refugees are more prevalent, but many Sri Lankans are working in the government sector. In Lebanon, many female domestic workers are from Sri Lanka, India, and Bangladesh, although issues of abuse of domestic workers have arisen. However, he noted that the bans or temporary on migration to address abuse issues have not been very successful, and because of the demand, bans seem to force people into irregular migration channels. South Korea draws many migrant workers from Asia because of welcoming migration policies, and Singapore draws migrants of all skills, mainly from China. He noted that Malaysia is also a major destination country for migrant workers, and Thailand receives a large population of migrant workers from Cambodia and Myanmar. Mr. Gois also noted that Hong Kong is facing demographic issues due to the effects of the one-China policy, and China may soon become a labour receiving country.

Mr. Gois reported that, in 2015, SAARC developed the Agenda 21 focusing on migration, under Nepal's leadership. He also noted that ASEAN was among the first inter-governmental bodies to look at labour migration, and in 2007, the Cebu declaration finally called for an instrument for the protection of the rights of migrant workers, although that instrument has not yet been developed. He further reported that the Colombo Process has stalled, but still hopes to move forward, and the Abu Dhabi Dialogue commenced in 2008. In closing, he noted that labour recruitment is a common topic to all of the processes, and the greatest risk of exploitation of migrant workers happens at the moment they decide to take up employment overseas, normally through private recruitment agencies. He noted that foreign embassies in the destination countries have not played a sufficient role in protecting their migrant workers in the past, but that seems to be improving, and parliamentarians can be requesting information about migration and the number of deaths of migrant workers overseas.

- Ms. Thelma Kay, Former Senior Advisor, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore



Ms. Thelma Kay, Former Senior Advisor, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore, provided a presentation on the standardization and harmonization of certification of long-term care work. (Photo: AFPPD)

Ms. Thelma Kay noted that the Asia-Pacific region is ageing rapidly, and countries actually age in waves. In addressing ageing issues, she noted a need to look more carefully at the definition of care workers (nurses, aids, certified nurse aids, personal care workers, etc.). Specifically, she noted the disparities in long-term care training programmes, both in terms of duration and in terms of curriculum contents. She reported that some countries do have national standards for caregiving, while others do not. In analysing the reasons for this disparity, she noted that Japan trains workers for long-term care as a career, as does Germany, and long-term care workers are well-paid in these countries. Hawaii, for example, is more flexible, and trains direct care workers at lower levels. The Pacific has long-term care workers on a seasonal basis, and Nepal has a training programme that is usually about three months long. Because of the variety of features of long-term care training and service in the region, it is difficult to unify into one structure, but some of the components are comparable across the countries and systems. Ms. Kay encouraged MPs to act at the national level and establish national standards for caregivers, for those working in homes as well as those in institutions. In establishing standards, Ms. Kay noted that the important issues to consider included determining core competencies and skills, accrediting the curriculum, and determining who provides the training.

Ms. Kay also noted the importance of making arrangements for long-term care and caregivers across borders. She noted that Pacific long-term care workers tend to come in a seasonal migration, and the Pacific countries entered into an agreement with Australia to provide support for individuals who come as long-term care workers. Israel has a caregiver training programme for Nepalese care workers migrating to Israel. She also noted that the economic implications of international certification standards and harmonization standards are necessary to consider, and other comparable certifications, such as those in the tourism industry, could be looked to as a model for establishing long-term care worker standards across the region. She also noted the importance of considering whether care workers are needed at the community level in some countries. She further noted a need to look at the trends of migration for long-term care, the coherence of policies, the feasibility of training caregivers, and the feasibility of a certification entity within the existing framework of an intergovernmental entity. In closing, she recalled the recommendations of the Standing Committee on Active Ageing at its last meeting, which included harmonization of long-term care worker training and conducting ageing surveys at the national level.

Small group consultations on the 2018 plan between National Committees, AFPPD Secretariat, and partner organizations

- South Asia

Hon. Mr. Ananda Bhaskar Rapolu, MP (India) reported the priorities and findings of the South Asia group to include the following:

- Gender equity and social empowerment, and empowering women politically in order to support their economic and social empowerment
- Trafficking in persons
- Climate change and food security
- Migration, including ensuring the security of migrating populations and concluding bilateral agreements on migration between sending and receiving countries
- Care for ageing members of the population
- Child marriage and proper enforcement of child marriage laws
- Refugee issues
- Drug abuse

- Southeast Asia

Hon. Mr. Dante Antonio L. Tinio, MP (Philippines) reported on the discussion of the Southeast Asia group in identifying priorities, including:

- Gender equality and women's empowerment
- Advocacy related to adolescent pregnancy
- Strengthening protection of migrant workers
- Including refugees and IDPs as part of the migration discussions
- Addressing the rights of migrant workers and supporting efforts toward a multi-lateral agreement to protect the rights of migrant workers at the ASEAN or APEC level
- Ageing, long term care, and active ageing, including the sharing of best practices and experiences in the region on long term care and active ageing
- Implementing a quota system for women's political participation at the party level, and where there is no commitment to a quota system, increasing the promotion of women's participation at the party level

- Central Asia

Ms. Marta Diavolova of UNFPA EECARO reported on behalf of the Central Asia group, which identified the following priorities:

- Investing in young people, so that they age well and in good health
- In terms of youth issues that could be addressed at the upcoming youth conference, quality of education, IT and technology, language proficiency, and transitioning to the labour market
- Conducting rapid assessment in the education system
- Addressing the procedures for sending countries for migration, and protecting the rights of migrants in the receiving countries
- Addressing the needs of children left behind by migration
- Collaboration on the development of national and regional plans
- Cervical cancer prevention, maternal health and maternal mortality, and HIV
- Other reproductive health issues, including budget implications of efforts in this regard
- Developing medical insurance systems
- Closing the pay gap between pensioners

- Pacific

Ms. Roslyn Dundas of the Australian Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (APGPD) Secretariat reported on the discussions and priorities of the Pacific group as follows:

- Violence Against Women, and the need for both legislative and enforcement work, as well as addressing community attitudes through education and awareness
- Using the Factsheets across the Parliaments to continue to monitor how women are being supported in challenging VAW in their communities
- Women's empowerment, especially in understanding and addressing the barriers to women's leadership in parliaments and communities, which could come through both legislative reform and community reform
- A commitment to staying in touch and communicating with one another to share resources and ideas to achieve these goals

Closing session

Closing remarks

- Hon. Mr. Lakshman Senewiratne, State Minister of Science, Technology and Research

Hon. Mr. Lakshman Senewiratne congratulated the delegates on coming to a set of conclusions through their hard work during the sessions. He also expressed his thanks to Dr. Marumoto and the AFPPD Secretariat on behalf of government of Sri Lanka. He expressed his hope that the General Assembly and individual Committees will achieve and reach their targets. In closing, he noted that Asian nations can work together, and invited all participants to come back to visit Sri Lanka again.

- Mr. Suvinda Singappuli, Director, National Secretariat for Elders; SLPPD

Mr. Suvinda Singappuli closed the session by wishing participants a safe and happy stay in Sri Lanka. He expressed his hopes that the visit to the Parliament, and the National Committee strategy meeting were fruitful as well. He noted that, although this event was coming to an end, the participants needed to keep moving forward as a team to achieve their commitments. In this regard, he noted that national capacity building and strategic partnership building will be key. Long term care, cross border movement, women's empowerment, and investing in youth seem to be the key issues moving forward, and he thanked all participants for their active contributions to the proceedings. He also expressed his thanks to SLPPD, the Honourable Ministers who participated, and to all of those who contributed to the success of the General Assembly, including the AFPPD Secretariat.

**The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development
Youth Parliament
9 October, 2017**

Monday 9 October	
07:45	<i>Meet at the Hotel Lobby</i>
08:00	<i>Leave the Hotel</i>
09:00 – 10:30	VISIT TO YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA
09.00 - 09.15	WELCOME DELEGATES
09.17 – 09.20	National Anthem of Sri Lanka
09.21 – 09.22	The Speaker takes the Chair and address by the Leader of the House
09.22– 09.23	Announcement by the Leader of the House regarding the time schedule of the Youth Parliament
09.23 – 09.24	The Speaker calls upon the Minister of International Youth Solidarity , Mr. Kavin Bihara Muhandiramge to welcome the delegation and distinguished guests
09.24 – 09.27	<u>WELCOME ADDRESS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Kavin Bihara Muhandiramge, Minister of International Youth Solidarity in the Youth Parliament
09.27 – 09.30	<u>OBJECTIVES OF THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speaker of House
09.30 – 09.50	<u>OPENING ADDRESS</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. W.G.S. Erandika Weliange, Attorney-at-Law, Chairman/Director General of National Youth Services Council • Hon. Dilan Perera, State Minister of Highways to address the Chamber • Hon. Ms. Ann Sudmalis, the Vice Chairperson, AFPPD
09.50 – 10.20	<u>INAUGURATION OF DEBATE</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. J.N.G. Namal Pranith Jayamanne Entrepreneurship, National Policies and Economic Affairs in the Youth Parliament “Suggestions for the New Constitution of Sri Lanka”
10.21 – 10.24	<u>VOTE OF THANKS</u> Mr. Thilina Prasad Weerasekara, Leader of the Opposition of Youth Parliament
10.24 – 10.25	The Speaker adjourns the House
10.25 – 10.35	Tea break
10.35 – 10.45	Group Photo
<i>Buses to leave for the PARLIAMENT HOUSE</i>	

**VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA
AND NATIONAL COMMITTEES STRATEGY PLANNING METING**

11:15- 12:30	<p>VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA</p> <p>Introductory Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Mr. Thilanga Sumathipala, Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (5 min.) <p>Welcome Address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hon. Mr. Karu Jayasuriya, Speaker of the Parliament of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (15 min.) <p>Q&A; Discussion (40 min.)</p>
12:30 – 13:30	<i>Lunch at the Main Parliament Building</i>
13:30 – 17:00	NATIONAL COMMITTEES STRATEGY PLANNING MEETING WITH PARTNERS:
13:30 – 14:15	<p>Plenary Session with National Committee Representatives</p> <p>At least one representative Member of Parliament and/or Parliament Staff is expected to attend the session for the joint National Committees Strategy Planning with AFPPD Secretariat and partner organizations.</p> <p>Opening Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Arthur Erken, Director, Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships, UNFPA (5 min.) • H.E. Mr. Bryce Hutchesson, Australia’s High Commissioner to Sri Lanka (5 min.) <p>Agenda Setting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ms. Seema Gaikwad, Policy Research and Advocacy Advisor, AFPPD <i>Objectives and Expected Results of the National Committees Strategy Meeting (II)</i> (5 min.) <p>Partner Presentations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. William Gois, Regional Coordinator, Migrant Forum in Asia <i>The Colombo Process, Abu Dhabi Dialogue, and Global Compact on Migration Process connecting the Sub-Regions (ASEAN, SAARC, PIF)</i> (15 min.) • Ms. Thelma Kay, Former Senior Advisor, Ministry of Social and Family Development, Singapore <i>Standardization and Harmonization of Certification of Long-Term Care Work</i> (15 min.)

14:15 – 16:15	<p>Small group consultations on the 2018 plan between National Committees, AFPPD Secretariat, and partner organizations</p> <p><i>(Break-out session)</i></p> <p>Central Asia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPs/Parliamentary Staff • Partner organizations • AFPPD Secretariat Staff <p>South and West Asia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPs/Parliamentary Staff • Partner organizations • AFPPD Secretariat Staff <p>Southeast and East Asia</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPs/Parliamentary Staff • Partner organizations • AFPPD Secretariat Staff <p>Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MPs/Parliamentary Staff • Partner organizations • AFPPD Secretariat Staff
16:15 – 16:45	Reporting Session:
16:45 – 17:00	<p>Closing Session:</p> <p>Closing Remarks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Suvinda Singappuli, Director, National Secretariat for Elders; SLPPD <p>Summary Conclusions & Wrap-up:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Mika Marumoto, AFPPD Executive Director <p><i>* Evaluation</i></p>
17:00 - 17:30	<p><i>Return to the Hotel</i></p> <p><i>Dinner (by participants' own arrangements)</i></p>
Tuesday, 10 October	
	All participants depart

**VISIT TO THE YOUTH PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA,
VISIT TO THE PARLIAMENT OF SRI LANKA, AND
NATIONAL COMMITTEES STRATEGY PLANNING MEETING
9 October 2017 | Colombo, Sri Lanka**

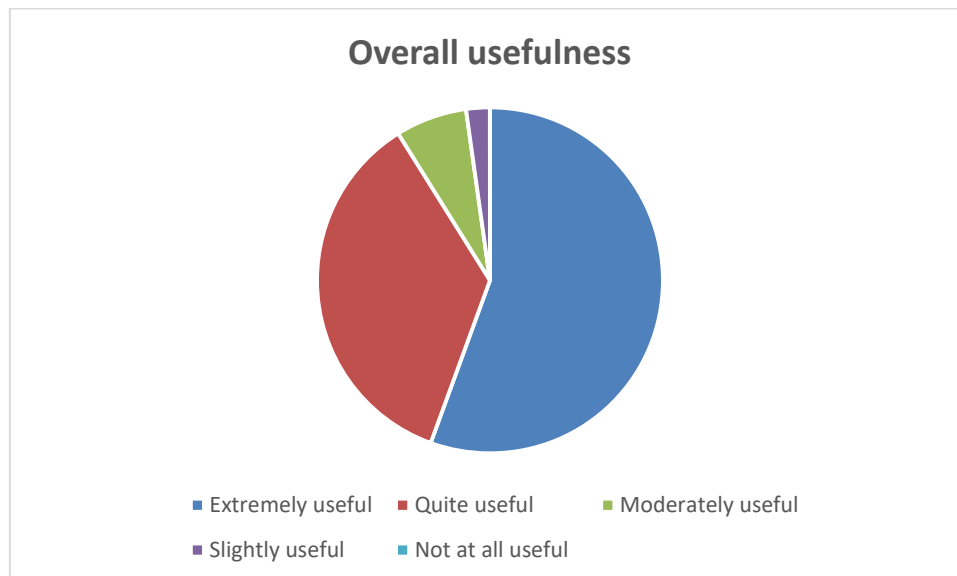
Evaluation results

On 9 October 2017, the AFPPD 12th General Assembly attendees were given an opportunity to participate in a number of related events: (1) mock session of the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament; (2) visit to the Sri Lanka Parliament; and (3) National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting.

A total of 47 participants (more than 25% of the total number of attendees) filled up the evaluation form to relay their feedback to the conduct of the above-mentioned activities.

Youth parliament session and visit to parliament

The respondents perceived the opportunity to observe the mock session of the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament as quite useful, garnering an average rating of 4.4 out of 5. More than half of them (55.56%) believed these visits were extremely relevant to their work; more than a third (35.56%) agreed they were quite useful; and the remaining said these visits were either moderately or slightly useful. No one among the respondents perceived the visits to the two parliaments as completely irrelevant.



The respondents raved on how Sri Lanka's model of youth participation in politics could contribute in developing future leaders, highlighting that this was a good model for advocating democratic participation. For some of the respondents, the concept of youth parliament was quite new, and they believed this could be a good model for countries to adopt.

They also expressed interest in hearing from the top leaders of Sri Lanka during the visit at the parliament.

Subjects of interest

When asked which subjects they would want to learn more of, the respondents expressed interest in obtaining further information on the following:

- On youth parliament
 - Programmes/activities of the youth parliament, including management of parliament house
 - Mode of election and composition of young parliamentarians
 - Impacts of having a youth parliament in a country
 - Enhancing young people's leadership skills
 - Identification of which issues the youth parliament is involved in
 - Status of youth participation in political processes in other countries
 - Financial allocation and support to the youth parliament

- Other issues
 - Sexual abuse and exploitation, and laws relate to them
 - Status of ageing in different countries, and elderly long-term care
 - Demographic dividend
 - Job opportunities and professional development initiatives in schools and colleges
 - Migration situation in Gulf and Asian shores

Further recommendations for visits conducted by AFPPD

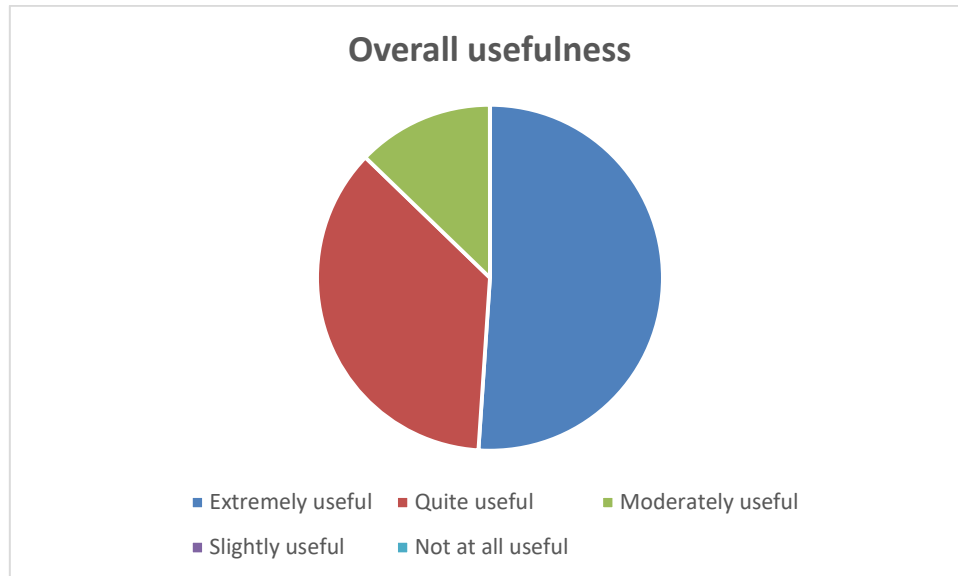
As it's been suggested that study tours be attached to conferences, meetings and workshops organized by AFPPD, below recommendations were provided by the respondents for same activities in the future:

- On activity contents/conduct
 - Briefing/introduction (structure, history, etc) about the system/facility before the observing the actual activity
 - More interactive discussions
 - Better simultaneous translation
 - More relaxed atmosphere

- Recommendations for next themes
 - Elderly care system in Japan and other countries
 - Good practice of democracy by Australia and Philippines
 - Longer time to be allocated to the visits
 - Migrant worker rights in receiving countries

National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting

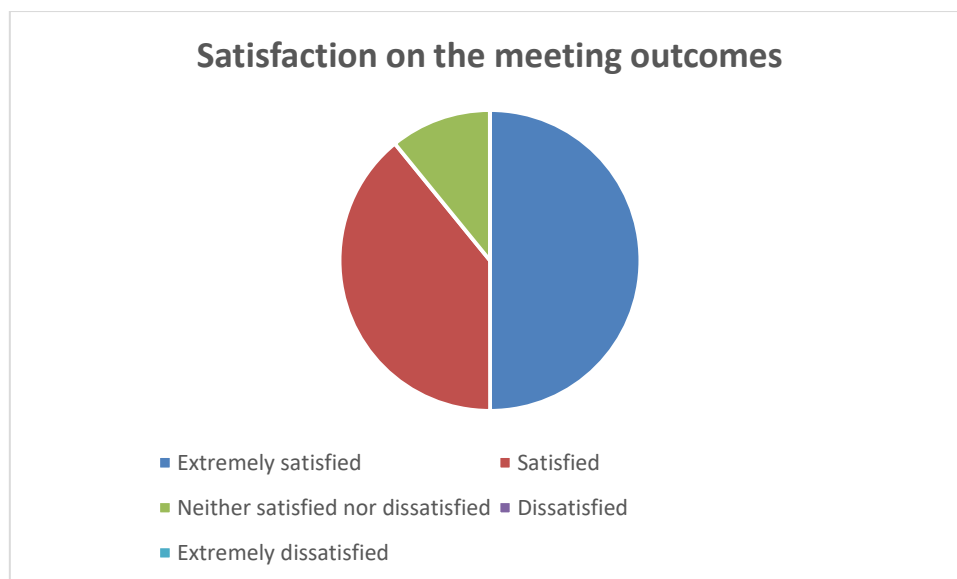
On the average, the National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting held on the afternoon of 9 October 2017 was rated 4.4 out of 5 by the respondents. More than half of them said this meeting was extremely useful to their work. Another 36.17% confirmed it was quite useful, while the remaining respondents said the meeting was moderately useful for them.



While the respondents lauded the meeting as a good venue for national committees to exchange information and ideas (they specifically raved on the breakout sessions being interactive), develop better understanding and consensus for action, and harmonize programmes, they also provided a number of suggestions for future conduct of the same kind of meeting:

- Introductory speeches need to be shortened.
- More focused discussion questions are needed.
- National committees reporting session (arranged during the General Assembly) can be done in the same manner as the breakout session to save time.

With regard to the meeting outcomes, the respondents also gave an average rating of 4.4 out of 5, confirming their satisfaction. Fifty percent (50%) of them were extremely satisfied with the meeting outcomes; 39.13 % were satisfied; while the remaining said they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied.



In addition, the respondents also provided below remarks:

- “There is a very positive and appropriate plan that has been put forward.”
- “The outcomes were well-discussed and targeted priorities.”
- “They were decided on a participatory manner.”
- “The benefits of strategic planning include to improve programme performance, use of resources, understanding of programme context, decision making, and political support for your programme.”
- “I’m not sure that there was consensus from the group. It felt a bit rushed.”
- “We could have structured for better clarity and outcome.”
- “Much wider and scientific planning are needed.”

Influencing national policies on gender equality and women's empowerment, active ageing and investing in youth

When asked on their action plans following the outcomes of the National Committees Strategy Planning Meeting, the respondents indicated below items:

- General
 - Working together with AFPPD, other countries and partners
 - Learn more from experts
 - Provide training to MPs and arrange local advocacy efforts
- Thematic
 - Gender mainstreaming in legislations
 - A leadership camp for young people, especially women, thinking about politics
 - Survey of local elderly care facilities
 - Establish an electoral parliament for youth
 - Health insurance for all citizens
 - Migration skilling
 - Increase employment opportunities for young people

Recommendations for future AFPPD national committee planning meetings

- Schedule the meeting earlier in the day
- Allow longer time for discussion
- Structure planning and clear objectives and outcomes, as well as actions and timeline