



## Kyrgyzstan National Committee Re-Activated

### Interview with Hon. Osmonbek Artykbayev

December 13, 2016

As 2016 is reaching its end, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) would like to share an interview with Hon. Osmonbek Artykbayev, Member of Parliament from Kyrgyzstan, on his experience and achievements since the reactivation of the National Committee of Kyrgyzstan on Population and Development (NCKPD) in November 2015. Hon. Artykbayev played a leading role in re-establishing this national committee to address population and development issues in Kyrgyzstan under the framework of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

### HIGHLIGHTED ACHIEVEMENTS IN 2016



1

Hon. Osmonbek Artykbayev was appointed to be the **Chairperson of the NCKPD**, the member National Committee of AFPPD in Kyrgyzstan (November, 2015)

2

He hosted the **AFPPD Parliamentarian Workshop: Legislating for the Full Achievement of the SDGs/ICPD Goals and Targets** (September 2-3, 2016);

3

He conducted a one-on-one advocacy meeting with the **Minister of Labour and Social Development** to initiate a national programme on ageing (September 2016);

4

He conducted advocacy meetings with various stakeholders to establish a **Population and Social Security Research Institute** under the Ministry of Labour and Social Development for data collection, analysis and population projections (September 2016).

5

He has raised questions during the **Parliament hearings** (September - December 2016) regarding the issues of:

> insufficient **access to contraception** for the vulnerable population

> national implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals**



## BACKGROUND

Hon. Osmonbek Artykbayev was elected as Member of Parliament in October 2015 and appointed to be the Chairperson of the National Committee of Kyrgyzstan on Population and Development (NCKPD) in November 2015. This is his second time heading AFPPD's National Committee since 2010.

In September 2016, Hon. Artykbayev hosted the first AFPPD Parliamentarian Workshop in Kyrgyzstan after his appointment to the NCKPD Chairperson. The workshop resulted in the development of the NCKPD's work plan to address policies related to ageing, investing in youth, and gender equality and women's empowerment in Kyrgyzstan. After the workshop, Hon. Artykbayev took follow-up actions and made several parliamentary inquiries related to AFPPD's strategic priorities, including Kyrgyzstan's implementation status of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and access to free contraceptives for vulnerable populations. Under Hon. Artykbayev's leadership, NCKPD succeeded in advancing important legislation, including the Law on HIV/AIDS and the Law on Fortification of Baking Flour.

## INTERVIEW

September 1, 2016

**You were one of the authors of the Law on Fortification of Baking Flour during your first term in the Parliament from 2005 to 2010. Why did you think this was an important issue?**

**This law was necessary to respond to the high level of anaemia among Kyrgyz women and children.**

Data and research showed that the prevalence of anaemia was alarmingly high as 80% among women and 40% among children aged 6 months to 12 years old in various districts. Iron deficiency and the lack of iodine and other important elements have serious health implications on the development of new-borns and children. It is also particularly dangerous for pregnant women as it increases the risk of severe bleeding during delivery, resulting in fatal consequences.

**To address this issue, the Parliament adopted the Law on Fortification of Baking Flour with vitamins and minerals in 2009.**

In Kyrgyzstan, bread is the main source of nutrition for many poor people in the country. The law was commended by various international organizations including the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

**The other significant legislative initiative of yours was the adoption of the Law on HIV/AIDS in Kyrgyzstan. Could you tell us more about your work on this?**

The Law on HIV/AIDS was developed and adopted in 2005 which was also my first year as Member of Parliament. Kyrgyzstan's geographic location, at the crossroads of drug trafficking through Central Asia, has unfortunately amassed a large number of injection drug users who also fuelled the HIV epidemic. As parliamentarians, we acknowledged that it was impossible to stop the epidemic without passing any adequate legislation. At that time, there was no special law in addressing HIV in Kyrgyzstan. Therefore, we took the initiative to engage with many international organizations such as UNDP, UNAIDS, and UNFPA to receive technical assistance.

The bill that we initiated and adopted was considered among the best of its kind. It grants people living with HIV the priority access to primary care facilities and medication, and also stipulates the article on punishment for those who discriminate against people living with HIV and AIDS. For the first time, the law called for the legal distinction between voluntary and compulsory HIV testing; informed written consent is now required in all cases except those mandated by court order. Today, Kyrgyzstan has a low HIV prevalence. I believe that this outcome is partially due to our legislative efforts.



*Hon. Osmonbek Artykbayev presented on the migration situation in Kyrgyzstan at the 11th Women Ministers and Parliamentarians Conference organized by AFPPD in November 2016 in Bangkok, Thailand.*

*“We have just started to implement the National Committee of Kyrgyzstan on Population and Development (NCKPD)’s work plan in order to achieve our goals such as increasing women’s participation in decision-making at the local level, enhancing a national youth policy, and developing a national ageing policy.”*

**-Hon. Osmonbek Artykbayev**  
MP, Kyrgyzstan and Chair of NCKPD

**Aside from population issues, we understand that you are passionate about environmental issues, particularly, the wild life. Several years ago, you successfully advocated for better protection of conservation areas from poaching. What has changed since then?**

Kyrgyzstan boasts its natural beauty. However, our legislation concerning environmental protection was very weak. This resulted in the depletion of natural resources as well as many other ecological problems. I am a member of some environmental groups conducting regular monitoring expeditions to preserve the nature and facilitating the wild life migration between ecosystems. I also initiated the creation of conservation areas in Kyrgyzstan as part of the preventive measures recommended by our environmental groups. In fact, in 2015 and 2016, two national conservation parks were created: “Khan-Achu” (more than 30,000 hectares) and “Alatai” (more than 56,000 hectares) in Jalalabad Oblast. Since then, we have seen some positive signs of recovery from the past environmental degradation. Now I would like to continue to help preserve the conservation parks, involving scientists to learn more about the nature in Kyrgyzstan.

**It has been almost one year since your appointment as Chairperson of the NCKPD. What are your next plans during this parliamentary term?**

**As the NCKPD Chairperson and as a Parliamentarian, I will continue my work related to the ICPD\* Programme of Action and the SDGs.**

I believe that the SDGs are addressing the challenges comprehensively in our country. We have a lot of unresolved issues. We, parliamentarians, will make efforts to address unresolved issues and make progress, by mobilizing other parliamentarians, government members, civil society as well as the international organizations. I believe that engaging with the civil society in addressing the ICPD and SDGs is critically important. We have just started to implement the NCKPD’s work plan in order to achieve our goals such as increasing women’s participation in decision-making at the local level, enhancing a national youth policy, and developing a national ageing policy. I really do hope that, together, we can deliver substantive results in advancing the ICPD-related SDGs.

\* ICPD = International Conference on Population and Development, held in Cairo in 1994.