



International Women's Day

March 8, 2017

In celebration of the **2017 International Women's Day**, the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) is pleased to share messages from some of the members of **AFFPD's Standing Committee on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment**. This year's theme is "Women in the Changing World of Work: Planet 50-50 by 2030."



Hon. Irina Aronova
MP, Kazakhstan

*"Women need to **know their rights and not to be afraid to defend them**. I would advise women to engage in civil society, non-governmental organizations, political parties, and network with other women. For example, in Kazakhstan, 55.5% of individuals working in civil service are female and they can directly influence the socio-economic and legal situation of other women and girls."*



Hon. Sue Moroney
MP, New Zealand

*"As we celebrate International Women's Day, we parliamentarians need to stop and take stock of what we still have to do to **achieve gender equality a lived reality** in our own countries."*



Hon. Selina Napa
MP, Cook Islands

*"There is a famous saying in the Cook Islands by our first Premier, Sir Albert Henry: no one in the tribe gets left behind. The Sustainable Development Goals are ambitious but we, as Members of Parliament of the Cook Islands, are committed to push for **50-50 equal participation among men and women by 2030**. We cannot achieve sustainable development if half the population are left behind."*



Hon. Julie Soso
MP, Papua New Guinea

*"Equality for women in Papua New Guinea is our biggest challenge. With increased government support and a strong emphasis on gender equality at all levels and sectors, it is slowly paying off. There's still much to be done but, **Papua New Guinea is heading in the right direction.**"*



Hon. Viplove Thakur
MP, India

*"Gender equality is still a long way from the reality of today's India. We have made progress but there is still a lot to do. **Women's voices must count** in decision-making and their contributions to society recognized."*



Hon. Khayriniso Yusufi
Vice-Speaker of Lower House, Tajikistan

*"As parliamentarians, we strive to ensure **equal rights and opportunities** for men and women through legislation and policies. However, in reality women around the world face barriers that prevent them from attaining education, starting their own business, becoming engineers, scientists or policy makers. These barriers are mainly **stereotypes and traditional roles** that women have to play in our societies. My advice to all women is to never give up your dreams and never be discouraged. Believe in yourself, learn, and work on self-development."*