



PRESS RELEASE

AFPPD Central Asian Sub-Regional Conference Concluded with Parliamentary Advocacy Plans for Sustainable Development



Members of Parliament and Government Representatives from Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe, and United Nations representatives participated in the AFPPD Central Asian Sub-Regional Conference on June 28-29, 2017, in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. (Photo: AFPPD)

BISHKEK, 30 June 2017 – Over 45 parliamentarians, ministers and government representatives from Central Asia, South and Southeast Asia, and Eastern Europe, attended the **AFPPD Central Asian Sub-Regional Conference** on June 28-29 in Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan. Organized by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) and its member National Committee, the National Committee of Kyrgyzstan on Population and Development (NCKPD), the meeting aimed to confront challenges faced by vulnerable populations in Central Asia.

In the opening, Hon. Mr. Chynybai Tursunbekov, Speaker of the Jogorku Kenesh of the Kyrgyz Republic, acknowledged the efforts of the government to address the needs of vulnerable groups, including those living in extreme poverty. “Despite the geopolitical and economic challenges, Central Asian countries have overcome many social barriers in development. However, with new challenges such as population ageing and migration, parliamentarians must play a more active role to ensure that no one is left behind,” he said.

Dr. Talantbek Batyraliev, Minister of Health of Kyrgyzstan, highlighted the need to adopt a holistic approach to social issues. “When addressing healthcare, we must also take into account of other factors such as water sanitation. This is in fact an indicator of public health as access to drinking water affects child and maternal mortality rate,” he said.

Dr. Saida Umarzoda, First Deputy Minister of Health and Social Protection of Tajikistan, stressed that coordination among parliamentarians, governments and civil society is necessary for the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). She highlighted several collaborative initiatives in Tajikistan including capacity-building programs for healthcare professionals in communities on gender sensitive services.

Among the vulnerable groups identified was the elderly. Mr. Pedro Pablo Villanueva, Representative for the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in Kazakhstan, encouraged participants to view ageing from a social and economic perspective in addition to a human rights lens. “We have to look at ageing as a result of improved health system, including reproductive health. Now is the time to create conditions where ageing populations can contribute to the social and economic development of their countries,” he said.

Youth issues in Central Asia were also addressed including political participation, education and social support for young people. Mrs. Dilnoza Ahmadzoda, Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Youth, Sport and Tourism Affairs in Tajikistan, noted the number of young entrepreneurs has increased in Tajikistan due to provision of grants by the government. Hon. Dastan Bekeshev, Member of Parliament of Kyrgyzstan, reinforced the need for governments and parliamentarians to support social entrepreneurship and voluntary activities for young people.

The two-day meeting concluded with parliamentarians developing country advocacy action plans on priority population and development issues. Among the issues identified were family planning, active ageing, healthcare support, and life skilled-based education for youth. The conference was closed by Hon. Mr. Osmonbek Artykbayev, Member of Parliament of Kyrgyzstan and NCKPD Chairperson, Dr. Mika Marumoto, AFPPD Executive Director, and Ms. Marta Diavolova, Regional Advisor on Strategic Partnerships at UNFPA, followed by a study tour to the Kyrgyz State Technical University.

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The AFPPD Central Asian Sub-Regional Conference is funded by the Japan Trust Fund and UNFPA, and is the first AFPPD sub-regional conference in Central Asia since the adoption of the SDGs.

Background: AFPPD is a network of 29 parliamentary committees from across the Asia-Pacific region. AFPPD advocates for parliamentary action and change, in support of population and development issues: gender equality and women’s empowerment including sexual and reproductive health and rights; investing in youth; active ageing; and population dynamics.

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