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Sri Lanka Forum of Parliamentarians on Population
and Sustainable Development

PRESS RELEASE

AFPPD 12th General Assembly reaffirms Asia-Pacific parliamentarians’ commitment to achieving SDGs



Sri Lanka warmly welcomed the representatives of the AFPPD 12th General Assembly with her rich and colorful cultural performance, 7 October 2017. (Photo: AFPPD)

Colombo, 11 October 2017 – The Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) successfully concluded the 12th General Assembly in Colombo, Sri Lanka, on October 9, with its reaffirmed commitment to accelerate the implementation of the AFPPD Strategic Plan 2016-2019 for the remaining period up to 2019. Over 150 participants, including Members of Parliament and AFPPD’s strategic partners collectively confirmed to take follow-up actions on the statements of commitment made by AFPPD over the past two years on realizing gender equality, empowering women and girls, ending child marriage, combating human trafficking, investing in youth, ensuring healthy and active ageing, and promoting universal health care, thereby contributing to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

The Opening Session set the tone of the entire General Assembly under the theme of “Engaging Parliamentarians, Pursuing Human Development.” In his video opening message, AFPPD Chairperson Hon. Prof. Keizo Takemi from Japan emphasized the critically important role played by parliamentarians in achieving the SDGs and in addressing the strategic priority issues collectively set by AFPPD. Subsequent keynote speeches reminded the participants of the harsh yet inexcusable fact that we still

could not prevent roughly 800 maternal deaths each day in the world, and underscored the imperative of policymakers' accurate understanding of population dynamics in each country in order to ensure the right to health for all and reap a demographic dividend by investing in youth.

Hosted by the Government of Sri Lanka and the Sri Lanka Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Sustainable Development (SLPPD) headed by Hon. Mr. S. B. Dissanayake, the AFPPD General Assembly solicited high-level political leaders' participation and their commitment to AFPPD's mission. Among them included were chief guests, Hon. Mr. Tilak Marapana, Minister of Development Assignments and Foreign Affairs and Hon. Mr. Sarath Amunugama, Minister of Special Assignments. Also, AFPPD General Assembly representatives were warmly welcomed by Hon. Mr. Karu Jayasuriya and Hon. Mr. Thilanga Sumathipala, currently serving as Speaker and Deputy Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka, respectively, who advocated for appropriate budget allocations for achieving the SDGs.



The AFPPD 12th General Assembly delegates observed the mock parliamentary session conducted by the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament, 9 October 2017. (Photo: AFPPD)

Following the 12th General Assembly main session, SLPPD also organized a mock youth parliament, which has been practiced in Sri Lanka for years. Advocating for youth political participation through a mock parliament was among the recommendations made by the AFPPD Standing Committee on Investing in Youth in March and June 2017. SLPPD spearheaded implementing this recommendation, demonstrating a good practice to AFPPD's other member national committees. "The Sri Lanka Youth Parliament comprises elected members who not only participate in a regular mock parliament but also utilize grants to implement their own social projects in their respective constituencies," Hon. Mr. Dilan Perera explained the long-invested and institutionalized model of the Sri Lanka Youth Parliament. Many representatives from AFPPD national committees expressed their determination to implement a mock youth parliament, emulating the Sri Lanka model.

Background: As of October 2017, AFPPD is a network of 30 parliamentary committees 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.

For media inquiries, please contact:

Abby Generalia
 abigail@afppd.org
 +66 2219 2903 (Ext. 113)