

THE AFPPD SERVES AS A FORUM WITH THE GOAL OF CREATING A BETTER FUTURE FOR ALL HUMAN BEINGS



## AFPPD's Annual Conference: Addressing Three Pillars and Beyond ICPD30

*Nusa Dua, Bali, Indonesia - 7-9 October 2024*

Parliamentarians and key stakeholders met over three days to discuss emerging population and development issues in the Asia-Pacific in the context of ICPD30, such as gender equality, women's empowerment, investing in youth and active aging. Lessons learned and good practices were shared, including progress, challenges and finding better solutions such as policy formulation and budget allocation. It was also emphasised the importance of improving knowledge and commitment of parliamentarians in the region in order to implement population issues as prescribed in ICPD30.

The AFPPD conference was jointly organized with the Asian Population & Development Association (APDA), Indonesia Forum of Parliamentarians on Population & Development (IFPPD), National Family Planning Coordinating Board (BKKBN), International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF), and FP2030. Attendees included parliamentarians, policymakers as well as representatives of the UN, international organizations and NGOs. More than 60 participants from 19 countries in the Asia-Pacific region came together.



On the first two days, participants shared their experiences through a series of presentations and discussions on issues around demographic changes, youth development and demographic dividend, women empowerment and gender equality, population aging, climate change, and how parliamentarians address the issues in Asia-Pacific countries.



On the third day, participants were given the chance to see, observe, and have dialogue with local decision makers, young people and NGOs in Bali on adolescent sexual and reproductive health and youth development, on gender equality and prevention of gender-based violence, and on integrated services for aging people.

The combination of sharing experiences among the participants and field observations provided a comprehensive understanding on how to address the three pillars of AFPPD and the ICPD Program of Action, including climate change in their respective countries.

*Continued on page 2*



*Continued from page 1*



A range of important issues were discussed at the meeting, such as the way population dynamics currently occur in the Asia-Pacific, although at different stages: fertility decline, demographic dividend, and population ageing. Climate change was another key issue, one that affects certain countries disproportionately, especially archipelagic countries and vulnerable communities. It is necessary to address climate change through multifaceted and collective action. More generally, fostering global cooperation is paramount to achieving sustainable development goals and creating a more resilient and sustainable future for all.

The parliamentarians in attendance agreed to support addressing the impacts of population changes: fertility decline, demographic dividend, and aging populations, and addressing the impact of climate change. They also committed to support the development of laws, policies and programs to conduct south-south cooperation to address the above issues.

*The report of the AFPPD Annual Conference in Bali is available to read on the AFPPD website.*

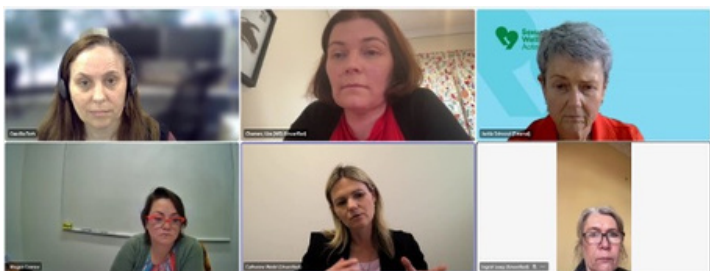
## **News from National Committees**

### **Australia and New Zealand meetings**

*Wellington, New Zealand - 27 September 2024*

The New Zealand Parliamentarians' Group on Population and Development met with the Australian Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (APGPD) for the first time. Both parliamentary groups work to advocate for sexual and reproductive health, the rights of women, and sustainable development in the Pacific region.

It was a productive sharing experience for the MPs who attended, and a range of topics were discussed including international engagement, maternal health, the 8th International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, and the sexual and reproductive health rights of 'Pacific Australia Labour Mobility' and 'Recognised Seasonal Employer' scheme workers in both countries.



*Canberra, Australia - 18 November 2024*

The APGPD held a briefing at Parliament House entitled 'Protecting Choice and Rights in Australia and Globally'. Simon Cooke, Global CEO of MSI Reproductive Choices, discussed the state of sexual and reproductive health rights in Australia and globally, outlining existing challenges and barriers to access.

Despite alarming statistics about unsafe abortions and teenage pregnancies, MSI has contributed to increasing contraceptive use in regions such as Kano, Nigeria and Senegal, and continue to provide family planning, safe abortions, and maternal health services in 36 countries. The potential effects of conservative governments on these services were also discussed, concluding with the issues around accessible abortion services in Australia.

## Advocates push for Teen Pregnancy Prevention Bill and increased budget for reproductive health

Quezon City, Philippines - September 2024

More than 400 civil society organizations and government agencies joined forces to urge the Senate to pass the Teen Pregnancy Prevention Bill amid an escalating teen pregnancy crisis in the Philippines. Despite being on the Senate's plenary agenda since March 2023, the bill has only undergone one interpellation in August. Meanwhile, the Philippine Statistics Authority reports that 17 babies are born to adolescent mothers aged 10–19 every hour, totaling 150,138 births in 2022. Advocates made this call during the press conference on 19 September, which featured compelling testimonials from former teenage mothers and youth advocates.

In the same month, advocates and key stakeholders gathered in a consultative budget forum, jointly organized by the Philippine Legislators' Committee on Population and Development (PLCPD) and Gabriela Women's Party (GWP), to demand increased funding for sexual and reproductive health and other critical programs for women, youth, and children in the proposed 2025 Philippine national budget.

PLCPD Vice Chairperson and GWP Representative Arlene Brosas presented an analysis of the proposed budget for sectors such as education, health, housing, agriculture, industry, and labor, and compared the proposed 2025 allocation for various programs for women and children to last year's budget.

In his opening message, PLCPD Executive Director Romeo Dongeto emphasized the need for ample budget allocations to effectively implement SRHR-related laws, pointing out that these investments are critical to upholding every Filipino's fundamental right to health and well-being.

Following the recent Senate approval of the General Appropriations Bill, the bicameral conference committee is currently underway as Philippine Congress moves to form technical working groups to reconcile the differing provisions between the House of Representatives and Senate versions in the coming weeks. Advocates commit to sustaining their push for increased health and social services budget, ensuring the health and rights of Filipinos remain a priority.



Pictured from top to bottom: the Press Conference and the Consultative Budget Forum.

## Meeting of women parliamentarians

Vientiane, Lao PDR - 19 October 2024



The meeting of Women Parliamentarians of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (WAIPA) was organised by the National Assembly of Laos, as part of the 45th AIPA General Assembly. Members of Lao Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (LAPPD) attended this important meeting along with parliamentarians from across ASEAN countries, including members of the AFPPD.

The WAIPA Committee deliberated on two draft resolutions: (1) promoting parliamentary responses to gender for the resilience, connectivity, and inclusiveness of an ASEAN community; and (2) promoting the elimination of violence against women and girls in the ASEAN region.



## Seminar on Women, Peace and Security for Women Parliamentarians: Techniques and Methodology for Parliamentary Mediation and Negotiation

*Phnom Penh, Cambodia - 28-29 November 2024*

The National Assembly of Cambodia together with Cambodian Association of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (CAPPD) organized the Seminar on Women, Peace, and Security for Women Parliamentarians: Techniques and Methodology for Parliamentary Mediation and Negotiation. Hon. Lork Kheng, Chairperson of the National Assembly of the Kingdom of Cambodia's Commission, vice chair of CAPPD and Treasurer of AFPPD led the event which included parliamentarians, experts and stakeholders to exchange knowledge and best practices for carrying out the Women, Peace, and Security initiative.



## Regional meeting in India

*New Delhi, India: 17-18 October 2024*

Indian Assoc. of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (IAPPD) and The South East Asia Regional Coordination Mechanism Forum jointly organized the Regional Meeting in October. MPs from nine countries participated along with other partners from the Asia-Pacific, Africa and WHO.

Hon. Bhubaneswar Kalita, MP India and Vice Chair of IAPPD, was the chief guest and used his opening address to highlight the importance of political engagement to combat health-related issues, including malaria. He emphasised that Parliamentarians can use their influence and platforms to support acceleration to handle these issues at the level of their constituency.



## Population dynamics in Nepal

*Kathmandu, Nepal - 3-4 October 2024*

A workshop organized by the National Forum of Parliamentarians on Population & Development (NFPPD) focused on Population Dynamics and its implications for policy priorities.

Significant demographic shifts in Nepal were highlighted, including migration, urbanization, infertility, aging, as well as the potential benefits of the demographic dividend. Experts noted the decline in fertility rates, which have dropped from 4.6 children per woman in 1996 to 2.1 in 2022, as well as discussed the aging population, projected to reach 22.4% by 2061.



As Nepal transitions to a middle-income country, understanding these trends is essential for shaping effective policies. The program emphasized effective policies are context-driven and evidence-based, creating family-friendly environments that support both work and parenting. It also stressed the importance of learning from global experiences to develop proactive strategies that promote rights and choices in alignment with the ICPD agenda.



NFPPD also attended the 6th Asian Population Assoc. Conference held in Kathmandu, 27-30 Nov. NFPPD was one of the National Organizing Committee members of the conference.

## Secretariat officers of AFPPD member-states met in Bali

On 8 October 2024, the Secretariat officers met in Bali. Dr. Farrukh Usmonov, Interim Executive Director of AFPPD, expressed gratitude to the Secretariats for continuously supporting work of the National Committees, including agendas which stand in line with AFPPD's mandate. He briefed everyone about the work of AFPPD Secretariat in past months, implementing programs specifically designed to address AFPPD's strategic plan and to enhance the role of the national committees locally and regionally.



The officers of the national committees shared challenges and good examples of their work, including programs with donors that could also be involved in AFPPD's future events. They welcomed AFPPD's initiative of holding Secretariats dialogue and suggested the inclusion of this format as part of AFPPD's annual agenda.

## Looking to 2025: The future of the AFPPD

As we look back on another productive year, planning is already underway for 2025. These planned activities were discussed at the 97th Exec. Committee meeting (ExCom) in Bali. The year ahead includes activities in Nepal, Turkmenistan, Cambodia, Malaysia, Maldives, the Philippines and Fiji. The 15th General Assembly and ExCom will be held April 2025 in Malaysia.

At the recent ExCom meeting, the hosting of the AFPPD Secretariat was discussed, highlighting the need for AFPPD to operate independently. The consensus leaned towards following established decisions to facilitate progress and address budgetary constraints. Participants also shared prior operational challenges and the implications of shifting locations. It was also emphasized that the organization must learn from past experiences, given its history since 1981. Transition plans must be carefully managed to ensure sustainability.

The Secretariat will visit shortlisted countries to check on the logistics and technical aspects and report back at the 98th ExCom meeting, scheduled for April 2025.

*The minutes of the 97th ExCom meeting are on the AFPPD website.*

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