



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

NEWS LETTER

No.40 November 2015

Project for “Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in the Interlinkage between Population Issues and the Post-2015 Development Agenda” Implemented in Kenya

Adoption of a recommendation on the role of parliamentarians based on the SDGs

From 1-3 October, the Secretariat of the JPF (the Asian Population and Development Association: APDA) in cooperation with the Kenyan Parliament held a conference and a study visit programme centered on the theme “Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in the Interlinkage between Population Issues and the Post-2015 Development Agenda” in Nairobi, Kenya. Following on from the United Nations’ adoption on September 27 of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (Agenda 2030), the international development agenda from 2015 onwards, this initiative provided a pivotal opportunity for parliamentarians to propose recommendations on the role they should play in the achievement of Agenda 2030 internationally.



The conference provided a venue for parliamentarians to examine a range of issues, adopt a recommendation stating the role of parliamentarians for the G7 and TICAD, and to establish a foundation for putting a development agenda into action in light of the principles of the 2030

Agenda.

Issues the parliamentarians focused on in discussions during the conference were: (1) confirming that dealing with the population issue in Africa, which can be described as a “hot spot” in the development agenda, underpins the achievement of sustainable development; (2) building equal partnerships to promote global partnership, (3) applying diverse population structures in promoting sustainable development, and (4) identifying what role parliamentarians should play in establishing good governance, transparency, and accountability for the citizens of their countries, which are the cornerstone for global partnership.

In attendance at the conference were 56 parliamentarians and representatives from 18 countries including members of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the African Parliamentary Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (APF), the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF), and representatives from the Arab region. Representing the JFPF from Japan was Hon. Hiroyuki Nagahama, Vice-Chair of JFPF.

On the first day, as a master of ceremony, Hon. Fredrick Outa, MP from the host country Kenya, opened the conference and introduced distinguished speakers. H.E. Tatsushi Terada, Ambassador of Japan to Kenya, read the address of the co-organizer JFPF on behalf of Hon. Sadakazu Tanigaki, Chair of JFPF. Hon. Dr. Chris Baryomunsi, MP, President of APF (Uganda) and Hon. Dr. Jetn Sirathranont, MP, Secretary-General of AFPPD (Thailand), representing parliamentary organizations of the African and Asian regions, also gave addresses. With the reading of the opening declaration by Hon. Wilfred Machage, Senator, on behalf of H.E. Ekwee David Ethuro, Speaker of the Senate, Kenya, the conference was officially opened.



Hon. Hiroyuki Nagahama, MP, Vice-Chair of JFPF then delivered the first keynote speech, “Parliamentarians’ Role in Addressing Population and Sustainable Development: Reflections on Progress and a Vision for the Future,” and Mr. Chatterjee Siddharth, UNFPA Representative in Kenya, followed with his presentation of the second keynote speech, “Post-2015 Development Agenda and Population Issues”. The conference then moved on to the presentations and discussions of the sessions, which were organized according to the following themes:

- Session 1: Population and Sustainable Development Issues We Face in Today’s Independent World
- Session 2: A New Perspective on Building a Sustainable Society through Co-development: from Aid Mechanism to Development Partnership
- Session 3: Building Resilience: Double-bind of Utility Maximization and Resilience in Development.

On the second day, study visits took place, with participants paying visits to the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) (for which JICA is providing assistance), Mbagathi Hospital, the National Assembly of Kenya, and a youth center in the downtown area operated by an IPPF Member Association (Family Health Options Kenya: FHOK). These visits gave members a first-hand view of Kenya’s current initiatives in population, health, and youth issues, and



the opportunity to listen to people involved in these areas.

On the third and final day, sessions were held on the following themes as summary discussions:

- Session 4: Parliamentarians' Roles in Addressing Population Issues: Legislation, Budgeting and Mainstreaming into the National Development Agenda
- Session 5: Parliamentarians' Work in Building an International Common Framework for Sustainable Development: Good Governance, Accountability and Transparency
- Session 6: Syntheses of Discussion for the Parliamentarians' Recommendations to the TICAD and G7.

In the final session, Session 7 (Discussion for Adoption of Recommendations), Hon. Mathias Kasamba, MP (Uganda), served as Session Chair, and a recommendation, which became the outcome of the conference, was adopted unanimously (the full text is presented below).

In the closing ceremony, Hon. Dr. Florian Bodog, Senator (Romania) representing the EPF, and Hon. Loubna Amhair, MP (Morocco) representing the Arab region, gave addresses. These were followed by a message to the attendants from Mr. Lucian Kouakou, African Regional Director of IPPF, and words of thanks from Hon. Hiroyuki Nagahama, MP, Vice-Chair of JPFP as the organizer. With the closing address of Hon. Dr. Robert Pukose, MP, Vice-Chair of Health Committee of the National Assembly, Kenya, the three-day conference and study visits were officially brought to a close.

Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians in the Interlinkage between Population Issues and the Post-2015 Development Agenda



3 October 2015
Nairobi, Kenya



Recommendations

1. Preamble

- (1) We, parliamentarians representing 18 countries from Asia, Africa, Arab, and Europe¹, have come together here in Nairobi, Kenya, welcome the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development at a special summit of the General Assembly on September 27 as a “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity,” within a context of sustainable development, which integrate a number of different developmental fields which to date had been debated separately.
- (2) Addressing population issues is the most fundamental of all conditions for achieving sustainable development, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development should also mainstream responses to these issues.
- (3) Population issues are certainly not problems that can be solved by force and they are strongly linked to an individual country’s development policies. It is thus essential that in their capacity as representatives of the people parliamentarians commit themselves to these issues and take on the role of working to find solutions for them.
- (4) The advancement of globalization has accompanied deepening interdependence of nations. In order to advance sustainable development and build economically vibrant societies against this backdrop, both developed and developing countries as between equal partners should be a driving force by harnessing countries’ mutual characteristics based on true global partnerships, and which can then deliver economically vibrant outcomes.
- (5) The programmes that APDA has conducted through the JTF have played a pioneering role through the promotion of the work of parliamentarians to date in connection with population and development issues. In particular, the ground-breaking programmes that it conducted between 2009 and 2014 provided an important framework for clarifying the roles that parliamentarians are to fulfill when working for solutions of population issues.
- (6) In 2016, the 42nd G7 Summit will be held in Ise-Shima, Japan, and plans are being made for TICAD to be held here in Kenya. The need for the views and opinions of parliamentarians, in their capacity as representatives of the people, to be reflected at these important intergovernmental conferences which will be extremely important for achieving the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.
- (7) Developing “a world of universal respect for human dignity,” a guiding principle of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, is something that our work as parliamentarians in the areas of population and development has advocated for many years². In order to achieve this guiding principle, it will be essential to solve population issues within a framework of sustainable development, and to build economically vibrant societies that enjoy improved levels of health by adopting measures such as universal health coverage (UHC).
- (8) We propose guiding principles that will be needed to achieve these goals and being confident that these principles will be the key to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, we make the following recommendations.

2. Sustainable development with economic vibrancy

- (1) The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development is a sign that sustainable development on our planet cannot be achieved by developed or developing nations alone, but will only be achieved when all nations harness their particular strengths and cooperate with each other in a global partnership.
- (2) There is a stark contrast between the population issues occurring in different parts of the world today. Countries throughout the developed world are experiencing falling birth rates and aging populations, whereas

in many African countries population is still soaring. An essential condition for achieving sustainable development will be stabilizing the population in many countries, which includes taking measures against both large population increases and declining birth rates and aging populations.

- (3) With the spread of population programmes, preventing unwanted pregnancies will raise the position of young people and lead to better education opportunities for both men and women. Being the basis for any country's long-term development, population programmes are of urgent importance. For that reason parliamentarians in different countries should strongly lobby their own governments to mainstream population programmes that promote reproductive health (RH) and family planning services into their nation's development policies.
- (4) At the same time, in order to solve those issues, developed countries that are experiencing low birth rates and aging populations will need policies to achieve healthy life expectancy and to help those parents who want to have children. Political and social frameworks will be needed to deal with these issues under an integrated approach so that every individual will be able to use his or her abilities to make a contribution to the long-term development of society.
- (5) In newly industrializing countries, introducing the UHC system that their economies can sustain will raise the levels of people's health and make their economic development more sustainable through the effect that these schemes have in containing any further widening in disparities within their societies.
- (6) We therefore re-affirm that taking action on population issues constitutes the basis for national development policies in developing, newly industrializing, and developed countries alike. The difference in population structures between these three groups also means that nations can play complementary roles in the area of international development and cooperation.
- (7) In order for developed and developing countries to join forces organically as equal partners in development, building a set of common criteria will be crucial. We, the representatives of our fellow citizens, have an obligation of accountability to our people. With the objective of promoting cooperation on population issues, and in our capacity as parliamentarians, to date through JTF's projects we have advanced the causes of good governance, transparency, and accountability to the people, and have delivered results in those areas of which we can be proud of.
- (8) We make recommendations so that the concepts of good governance, transparency, and accountability, which we have put into practice to date as part of our fundamental responsibilities to the people who elected us, can become a set of common criteria for developed, newly industrializing, and developing countries alike to join forces together in a united and organic fashion.
- (9) Introducing a common system of this sort will help reduce obstacles to achieving international collaborative relationships. It will also enable resource mobilization, for which the Millennium Development Goals are prerequisites.

3. Building resilience

- (1) In a globalized world, natural disasters, infectious diseases, and food safety and security issues in one country or region can have major consequences in others.
- (2) Mechanisms of international cooperation will be needed to minimize the damage when these occur, and to allow the affected countries and regions to recover quickly. Major typhoons in Asia, new and recurring infectious diseases like Ebola in West Africa, extreme climate fluctuations, droughts, and torrential rains have a serious impact on food safety and security, particularly heavily on women, children, and society's marginalized and vulnerable groups.
- (3) We highly value any international cooperation on these issues, and we call on the international community to build a support system that can provide responses on an ongoing basis for such crises and natural disasters, which are predicted to occur more frequently in the future, and we will support the efforts of all national governments in this endeavor.
- (4) Recovery from crises and natural disasters of this kind is not something that can be achieved with outside support alone. It is indispensable for each country itself to prepare for such crises and natural disasters and adaptation without any further hesitation, and that task will require the building of public health systems operating at fundamental level. Maintaining functioning communities and the production of traditional food

crops, rather than commercial food crops, can help local people to provide their own aid and lead to more orderly situations in emergencies, through maintaining a minimum level of food security. We affirm that maintaining such local functionality constitutes the basis for any action to be taken in emergency situations.

- (5) Given that natural disasters impact particularly heavily more vulnerable members of society, we affirm that without nutrition suitable for children and pregnant women being secured, without the promotion of women's empowerment, without the protection of the human rights of children, and without achieving the spread of RH services which have a major impact on the health of women, it will not be possible to "build quality and resilient infrastructure" as cited in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

4. Call to action

- (1) Based on these acknowledgements, we make the following recommendations in order to realize the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and achieve sustainable development.
- (2) We affirm that indispensable conditions for advancing global partnerships are good governance, transparency, and accountability for the peoples of each country. Achieving solutions for population issues will serve as the basis for sustainable development, and to that end we will promote greater cooperation in overseas development assistance (ODA) in the field of population. In order to achieve the accountability that is owed to electors, we will lobby the governments of countries that lack formal mechanisms of accountability to submit regular reports to their national parliaments on ODA relating to population.
- (3) We take appropriate responses to the issues that each country faces in the form of natural disasters, infectious diseases, and food security and safety, and take action against the challenges that an aging society brings, by building the necessary relevant legal and regulatory frameworks; taking the lead in national planning to enable the development of resiliency along with economic rationality, which includes building and revitalizing communities and supporting the agricultural food production including indigenous agricultural food production from the perspective of food safety and security; and building mechanisms for international cooperation.
- (4) In order to achieve these objectives, we affirm that people must be at the core of any development, whatever form it may take. Each country's development agenda is to be drawn up from a long-term perspective and on a global scale, and that agenda must at the same time advance the human rights of every individual and increase his or her well-being. We issue a strong demand to governments and agencies to re-assess their programmes from these perspectives and to make sure they are consistent with these objectives.
- (5) The Parliamentarians gathered here urge their governments to take urgent measures to promote girl child education and to end child, early and forced marriages in tune with gender equality goal.
- (6) We demand that national and international agencies, including aid agencies, deliver evidence-based data, concisely-worded, and compelling, in order to convince our fellow parliamentarians and win the support of the population in their electorates for population- and development-related activities.
- (7) We, the Parliamentarians of all Nations in the World do pledge our total commitment to play our central role of being good people's representatives to advance the people centered issues, ensure budgetary appropriations that are people friendly, conduct our oversight roles to ensure accountability, transparency and good governance in the SDG Agenda.

5. Conclusions

- (1) We highly value the initiatives taken by JPFP-APDA involving the work of international parliamentarians, in particular the founding in different regions of parliamentarians' fora on population and development as a result of their contribution, and the formation of a base for international networking in this field. This has an important role in promoting the processes of democratic development.
- (2) As a result of the success of APDA-JTF projects to date, it has become clear that it is essential for parliamentarians to have roles and actions in the solution of population issues, as well as a base from which they can work effectively. We affirm that parliamentarians' duties of good governance, transparency, and accountability to the people will be important and indispensable in promoting international role sharing that will be indispensable to advancing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, having developed and

developing countries as necessary counterpart for longer-term development.

- (3) We commit ourselves to the work of parliamentarians relating to population and development, which will be essential for realizing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development that has now been adopted, and for building sustainable societies where the dignity of individuals is protected.
- (4) We, together with APDA, express our gratitude for the valuable contribution from those countries as well as for the support of UNFPA, IPPF and other aid agencies to this project that aims to put population issues at the center of our development agenda.
- (5) Building capabilities for parliamentarians to fulfill their substantive functions will be essential for achieving the success of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In more than 30 years to date APDA has achieved great success in promoting the work of parliamentarians throughout Asia and Africa, and we call on international aid agencies, governments, the private sector, and civil society groups to maintain and expand their support for the work of parliamentarians such as this project.

¹ *Cameroon, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Malaysia, Morocco, Philippines, Romania, Sierra Leone, Tajikistan, Thailand, Uganda, Vietnam and Zambia*

² p2. International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (ICPPD), Cairo Declaration on Population and Development, 3-4 September 1994, Cairo, Egypt