



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

NEWS LETTER

No.52 December 2016

Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and Director-General of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) Visit Japan

Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA and Mr. Tewodros Melesse, Director-General of IPPF, visited Japan to attend the World Assembly for Women (WAW! 2016), which was sponsored by the Japanese government to promote “a society where women can shine”. We report on the visits by Dr. Osotimehin and Mr. Melesse, who each had opportunities to interact with members of JPFP.

UNFPA Executive Director Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin

On December 13, the Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP) welcomed Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of UNFPA, to a JPFP joint committee meeting.

Dr. Osotimehin gave an address in which he expressed appreciation to Hon. Ichiro Aisawa (Acting Chair of JPFP), Hon. Prof. Keizo Takemi (Chair of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) and the Executive Director of JPFP), and other parliamentarians of Japan for their efforts in having population issue included in the outcome documents of the G7 Summit and TICAD VI. He expressed concern about potential impact that the Republican Party’s win in this year’s U.S. presidential election may have on UNFPA’s activities. Linking population issue and abortion, past Republican administrations have suspended all U.S. funding to UNFPA. For that reason, he requested the support of Japan, saying “we need further support of Japan for UNFPA to continue its work on issues of reproductive health (RH), family planning, women’s empowerment, and gender equality”.



Hon. Aisawa replied, “Japan faces a difficult fiscal condition. The weaker yen is also a drawback. However, considering that threats to human security are growing and that the issue of population and development is fundamentally important, we would like to make our utmost effort”. Hon. Prof. Takemi noted that while Japan will continue to make efforts to secure contributions to UNFPA, the activities of AFPPD had been impacted by reduction in funding from UNFPA to AFPPD, which is a regional network of

parliamentarians, including JPPF, working on the issue of population and development in the Asia and the Pacific. He requested UNFPA's cooperation in funding and urged UNFPA to play a central role in addressing the major issues of population aging and investment in youth by developing a strategic framework.

There was an active exchange of opinions on proposals made by Hon. Asahiko Mihara (Director of JPPF) and Hon. Ryuhei Kawada (Director of JPPF) on new approaches to securing funding, including the use of international solidarity levy and contributions from middle income countries.



IPPF Director-General Tewodros Melesse

Mr. Tewodros Melesse, Director-General of IPPF, paid courtesy visits to H.E. Yasuo Fukuda (Honorary Chair of JPPF), Hon. Ichiro Aisawa (Acting Chair of JPPF), and Hon. Toshiko Abe (Deputy Executive Director of JPPF), and expressed appreciation to the Japanese government and JPPF for many years of support to IPPF. Touching on a statement made by Prime Minister Shinzo Abe at WAW that Japan would “be steadfast in promoting projects for women in developing countries totaling more than 3 billion dollars by 2018, focusing particularly on building the foundation to ensure women’s rights are respected, to empower women, and to promote leadership”, Mr. Melesse emphasized that full implementation of RH and eradication of violence against women through such efforts were essential in building a society where women can shine. He noted that the activities of IPPF were extremely important in realizing the goals stated by Prime Minister Abe and that the partnership between Japan and IPPF should be further strengthened.

As one of the world’s largest international health NGOs, IPPF provides sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, and engages in awareness raising, education, and policy advocacy activities in more than 180 countries around the world. IPPF and JPPF have been partners for more than 40 years, ever since the foundation of JPPF. IPPF has supported the activities of JPPF for many years.



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