



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

NEWS LETTER

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JPFP's General Assembly Meeting: Welcoming UNFPA's Executive Director

JPFP welcomed two distinguished guests to its General Assembly meeting held on March 17: Dr. Babatunde Osotimehin, Executive Director of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and Mr. Arthur Erken, Director of UNFPA's Asia and the Pacific Regional Office, who were visiting Japan at the time.

Hon. Sadakazu Tanigaki, JPFP Chair, gave the opening address, in which he noted that the Earth's population was projected to exceed 9 billion by 2050, which will present the world with serious environmental and food security issues. He also noted that at the same time, as many countries such as Japan faced aging populations, action would be needed to build societies with older populations that remained economically vibrant. This, he said, stressed how important it was for the "JPFP, as the world's first non-partisan parliamentarians' group to concern itself with the issues of population and development, to fulfill a more active role in tackling population issues, which are growing ever more diverse".

Dr. Osotimehin followed with a speech in which he expressed his thanks for the financial and political support that Japan has given to UNFPA since it was founded, and he praised JPFP for the important role



it has undertaken in the work of parliamentarians in the field of population and development throughout the world.

Following his participation in the 3rd World Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in Sendai, Japan, Dr. Osotimehin emphasized that “to reduce the risk of disasters and for the recovery of affected regions, we must place women and girls at the center of rebuilding not as victims, but as individuals who hold the key to solutions”. Given how essential it is to provide expectant and nursing mothers with services even in the midst of disasters, and given furthermore that gender-based violence tends to increase in the circumstances that disasters throw up, he appealed for stronger measures to deal with this problem. In addition to these issues, Dr. Osotimehin also called on JPFP to lobby the Japanese government to have areas such as women’s and girls’ rights, women’s empowerment, and young people’s access to reproductive health (RH) services, incorporated into the Post-2015 Development Agenda, which is scheduled to be adopted in September of this year.



Hon. Aiko Shimajiri, Secretary-General of JPFP, then took over to guide the meeting, sharing with the members present a report of JPFP’s activities for FY2014.

Presentations were then given by Teruhiko Mashiko and Hiroyuki Nagahama, JPFP Vice-Chairs also present at the

meeting, with respect to the Japan Trust Fund (JTF) project in Zambia carried out by APDA in September.

Hon. Mashiko reported that this project had contributed to raising ODA accountability and transparency in the field of population and development in developing countries including in Africa, and had therefore given momentum to advancing good governance and democracy in these



countries. Giving a specific example, he said that seven years ago there was no reporting of ODA in the parliaments of almost all the countries of African parliamentarians participating in the project, which made it difficult to get hold of ODA information. Today, however, legislation has been adopted in Uganda and Zambia to implement such parliamentary reporting, and in Kenya through the participating parliamentarian the project is contributing to a process to amend the country’s Constitution, alongside a motion that has been introduced to

provide legislation on this topic.

Hon. Mashiko explained that the project had yielded one result or another in all the countries participating in the project, including India where a relevant proposal has been submitted to the country's President, and Indonesia where discussions are underway on introducing relevant legislation.

Through his observing of a project to provide young Zambians with access to RH services, Hon. Nagahama noted how important it was to gain an understanding of how young people themselves think and act on this issue. He also noted that the project had allowed for knowledge and information-sharing on the Banana Paper¹ project, which is contributing to reducing poverty among Zambian women and to their participation in society. Hon. Nagahama described this project as being very significant.



Hon. Keizo Takemi, Executive Director of JPFP and Chair of the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), then reported that AFPPD had set up a special task force which was introducing changes designed to bring AFPPD's secretariat in line with certain standards so as to improve its governance, transparency and accountability.

Hon. Ryuhei Kawada, a JPFP Director, is currently a member of the Advisory Group on HIV/AIDS in the Asia-Pacific Region of the Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU). Concerning his work in Japan, he has been promoting the development of laws to protect the health of women over the course of their lives, and he stated that in the future he would like to provide more active cooperation in this area both at home and abroad, for example by participating in conferences and other events.



On a motion tabled by Hon. Sadakazu Tanigaki, the Chair of JPFP, a resolution was adopted approving JPFP's activities plan and proposed budget for FY2015. With respect to new office bearer appointments, a resolution was adopted appointing Hon. Ichiro Aisawa, currently a Vice-Chair of JPFP, as Senior Vice-Chair, and Hon. Keizo Takemi, Executive Director of JPFP, as Chair of the International Cooperation Committee. A further resolution

¹ This is high-quality fair trade paper made from banana plant fiber taken from organic banana stalks, in a process developed using Japanese paper-making techniques. It came about from a desire to help solve two issues: the environmental issue of the loss of forests and wild animals, and the social issue of overcoming poverty in developing countries and helping women to become independent. The product is called One Planet Paper® <http://oneplanetcafe.com/>

was adopted delegating the appointment of other office bearers to the Chair, who would receive recommendations in that regard from each party.



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