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2014 INTERNATIONAL PARLIAMENTARIANS’ CONFERENCE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ICPD PROGRAMME OF ACTION

**Stockholm, Sweden, 23-25 April  2014**

*“*We reaffirm our commitment to the ICPD Programme of Action, recognizing that its implementation is essential for countries to reduce poverty, and social and economic inequality, improve the lives of all their peoples, safeguard the health and rights of women, men, girls and boys, including sexual and reproductive health and rights, promote gender equality and women’s health, create conditions in which all can live in dignity, protect the environment and ensure sustainable development.*.”* ***2012 Istanbul Statement of Commitment by MPs from 116 countries***

**CONFERENCE OUTLINE**

**I. Justification**

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, the international community agreed to allocate an annual sum of $18.5 billion by 2005, $20.5 billion by 2010 and $21.7 billion by 2015 for population and reproductive health programmes in developing countries. Two thirds of that amount would come from developing countries themselves, while the remaining one third would come from external donor funding.

Both donors and developing countries made promising starts, achieving their 2005 targets as set out at the ICPD. However, in 2009 the UN’s Commission on Population and Development updated and increased the costed population package included in the ICPD targets. This revision was necessary as the costs and needs to ensure the achievement of the ICPD had changed during the first 15 years of its existence, and by 2009 it was apparent that the current levels of funding were insufficient for the international community to be able to reach MDG 5 (a decline in the maternal mortality ratio in developing countries by 75%).

As we approach the deadline for the original Programme of Action, there are still serious gaps in the population funding required to meet the criteria above, which make it difficult for countries to provide the information, services and commodities needed to meet the ICPD goals by 2015.

Over the past decade, funding for reproductive health, especially family planning, has not been accorded the importance it deserves by the international community. Spending on reproductive health services has been steadily increasing, but nowhere near as fast as funding for STIs and HIV/AIDS. And spending on family planning is no higher now than it was when ICPD was held. As a result. funds for reproductive health and family planning are nowhere near sufficient for keeping up with the needs of an increasing number of couples of reproductive age in developing countries. It is estimated that there are over 215 million women who are not able to access the modern forms of contraception that they want.

In response to these challenges, the international community made two major moves in 2010.

* The UN launched a ‘Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health.’ This took place at the time of the UN Leaders’ Summit for the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in 2010, and approximately $40 billion was pledged towards women’s and children’s health and the achievement of MDGs 4 & 5 (to reduce child mortality and improve maternal health).
* In the same year, the Muskoka Initiative on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health was announced at the 36th G8 summit, which committed member nations to collectively spend an additional $5 billion between 2010 and 2015 to accelerate progress towards the achievement of MDGs 4 and 5.

In 2012, the UK Government and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation hosted a family Planning Summit, where donors pledged 4.6 billion to provide access to family planning services to an additional 120 million women in many of the poorest countries by 2020. This included $2 billion from developing countries and $2.6 billion from donor governments and other partners.

Whilst clearly being steps in the right direction, parliamentary scrutiny is now required more than ever to ensure that the world’s leaders’ actions match their words. Moreover, while developing countries as a whole are making progress in providing domestic resources for their population programmes, the poorest countries continue to depend entirely on external assistance. They will not be able to meet the needs of their populations unless donors increase their support.

But it is not only financial assistance that developing countries require. Another important challenge for advancing the ICPD agenda is the need to create and nurture an enabling environment in the domestic context for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR) issues. This can be realized by adopting and improving relevant laws, policies and programmes on population and development. Significant progress has been made in this area in the past decade.

* For example, 96% of the 151 countries that responded to UNFPA’s global survey in 2004 reported action to integrate population concerns into development policies and strategies.
* The partial omission of reproductive health from the original MDGs, and its instatement in 2005 under MDG 5b, also demonstrates both the importance that the issue has achieved among the international community, and the challenges that this issue faces from conservative forces.

Yet, many of the laws and policies, while improved, are still not up to task. And the implementation of existing laws and policies remains a challenge in many countries. More than 358,000 women die every year from treatable complications of pregnancy and delivery.  Population growth in developing countries is also still contributing, along with high resource consumption by affluent populations, to increasing stress on the global environment. It is obvious that much more needs to be done in order to meet all of the ICPD goals.

Whether or not we can fill the gaps in laws, policies and funding, and whether or not we can achieve the ICPD and the MDGs by 2015, depend on the political will of governments in both developed and developing countries. Strong support of parliamentarians is critical to building this political will. The IPCI conference will be crucial in keeping the issue alive and within mainstream parliamentary discourse across the world, both now and in the future.

**II. 2002 Ottawa, 2004 Strasbourg, 2006 Bangkok, 2009 Addis Ababa and 2012 Istanbul Conferences**

It is against this background that the first International Parliamentarians’ Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI/ICPD) was held in Ottawa, Canada, in 2002. The conference, held at the Canadian Parliament, brought together more than one 100 elected representatives from 72 countries and territories, along with secretariats of national, regional and global parliamentary groups, panelists and resource persons, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF).

The Ottawa conference established, for the first time, a global system of regular monitoring and follow-up of the ICPD for parliamentarians. It was designed to be the first in a series of conferences to be held every two years addressing the same two themes that are central to ICPD: resource mobilization and the creation of an enabling environment for population and development. The location of the conference would – as a general rule - rotate between the Asia and the Pacific, the African, the Arab, the Inter-European and the Inter-American regions.

The second IPCI/ICPD was held in October 2004 in Strasbourg, France, under the auspices of the Council of Europe. It attracted around 120 elected representatives from 82 countries and territories, including ministers and speakers of parliaments from both developed and developing countries. At its close, participants endorsed a strong set of commitments to advance the Cairo goals, reaffirming their responsibility to uphold the right of individuals to decide the number and spacing of their children, to empower women and to eliminate all forms of violence against them.

In November 2006, the third IPCI/ICPD was held at the United Nations Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. The conference brought together over 300 parliamentarians, government officials, non-governmental organizations and other participants from 100 countries. Participants took stock of the progress made by parliamentarians in advancing the ICPD agenda and developed regional action plans to take their collective efforts to a next level.

The fourth IPCI/ICPD was held in Addis Ababa in 2009. It gathered over 400 delegates, including parliamentarians and ministers from over 110 countries. Participants unanimously adopted the Addis Ababa Statement of Commitment, in which they pledged to exercise their oversight responsibilities to break the silence around gender discrimination and to promote sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights.

The most recent IPCI/ICPD Conference took place in Istanbul in May 2012. The Istanbul conference was an opportunity for parliamentarians to contribute to the United Nations mandated operational review on the ICPD. It bought together 500 participants from 116 countries who committed themselves to the unfinished agenda by unanimously adopting the [Istanbul Statement of Commitment](http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/news/2012/IPCI%202012%20-%20Istanbul%20Statement%20of%20Commitment%20-%20Final-25May%202012.docx). In it, and under the theme, Keeping Promises — Measuring Results, they determined to advocate for increased national and external funding for the entire implementation of the ICPD agenda in order to achieve access to [sexual and reproductive health](http://www.unfpa.org/rh/index.htm), including [family planning](http://www.unfpa.org/rh/planning.htm).

All five conferences generated tremendous results, with parliamentarians around the world making the Ottawa, Strasbourg, Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Istanbul Commitments a point of reference for their work in supporting the ICPD Programme of Action. Numerous parliamentary declarations and reports adopted at the national, regional and global levels in the past eight years, refer to - or build upon - the five Commitments and their calls to action.

Since the Ottawa conference, UNFPA has served as the IPCI/ICPD secretariat responsible for monitoring progress and disseminating information to parliamentarians on a regular basis. It has set up and is running an email newsletter entitled ‘Global Population Policy Update,’ which regularly reports on the progress made by parliamentarians and governments in fulfilling their commitments. It also coordinates both the regional and national networks of MPs committed to population and development issues around the world, and support them in their follow-up activities.

**III. The 2014 Conference**

The global and regional parliamentary groups that hosted the previous five conferences decided to convene the 2014 IPCI/ICPD in Stockholm, considering the increasingly infleuential role that that Sweden has been playing in promoting reproductive health.

The 6th IPCI/ICPD conference marks the 20th anniversary of the ICPD and the end of the original Cairo mandate. Despite the passage of time, the Cairo Programme of Action has proved to remain relevant and still resonates today as it did in 1994. Therefore, we should redouble our efforts to promote its visionary recommendations in any future development framework, as has already been done with the Millennium Development Goals.

Stockholm is seen as a perfect venue for this even, as parliamentarians would have the achievements of Ottawa, Strasbourg, Bangkok, Addis Ababa and Istanbul to build on. The conference is expected to produce a forward-looking and action-oriented declaration and action plan that will build upon previous IPCI Commitments.

The conference will also serve as a launching pad for the second phase of the visionary Cairo Programme and provide parliamentarians with a chance to consider strategic actions needed to significantly boost the implementation of the ICPD mandate.

**Purpose**

The conference will promote dialogue among parliamentarians from all regions of the world on the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, with a view to achieving further commitment to collective action in the areas of resource mobilization and the creation of an enabling policy environment for population and development.

**Hosts**

The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF) in collaboration with:

* Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD)
* African Parliamentarians Forum on Population and Development (APFPD)
* Forum of Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAPPD)
* Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (IAPG)

Under the auspices of:

* The Swedish Parliament – Riksdag on the initiative of the Swedish All-party Parliamentarian group on Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights

**Organizers**EPF and UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund

## Sponsors

* The Government of Sweden
* UNFPA

# Date and Venue

23-25 April 2014, Stockholm, Sweden

**Agenda**

Attached separately (still to be determined).

**Participants**

Approximately 500 participants are expected to attend the conference, including:

* Over 300 parliamentarians from all regions of the world
* Representatives from the national, regional and global parliamentary groups
* Panelists and experts (including ministers from donor and developing countries)
* Special guests, including Heads of States and UN agencies
* UNFPA and IPPF
* Non-governmental organizations
* Representatives of the host Government

Please note that participation is by personal invitation only.

**Cost of Participation**

For parliamentarians and other invited guests, the cost of travel and other necessary expenses will be covered from the conference budget. Observers, including NGOs, are asked to pay for their own travel costs.

**Steering Committee**

A steering committee consisting of two parliamentarians each from AFPPD, APFPD, EPF, FAPPD and IAPG was established in early 2013 to prepare for the conference. Its first meeting took place on 11 May 2013 in London and the second took place on 20 September 2013.

**Expected Outcome**

* A Statement of Commitment and Plans of Action that will spell out concrete actions to be taken by parliamentarians to further mobilize resources and create an enabling environment for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.
* Expansion the IPCI/ICPD network of parliamentarians and cultivation of champion parliamentarians in every participating country and region for achieving both the ICPD agenda and the relevant post 2015 development framework.