



Report of the Inaugural Launch of the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

4-5 December 2000, Paris

THE WORK OF PARLIAMENTARY NETWORKS AROUND THE WORLD

The first morning of the meeting was devoted to presentations from Chairs and representatives from parliamentary forums on population and development from various regions of the world.

AFRICA AND THE ARAB WORLD

Hon. Moustapha Ka, Chair of the Afro-Arab Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development and Deputy Speaker of the Senegalese Parliament, described the significant contribution that parliamentarians can make in directing decisions and policies of governments, and the capacity that parliamentarians have to create fundamental and lasting changes in society.

Mr Ka referred to the many international meetings and documentation and research that has been generated over the last decade on the subject of population and development, gender equality, human rights, and HIV/AIDS, and the basic understanding that these resources has created. However, he said that it is only the will to implement programmes that will make a real difference, and reminded the audience of the Minister for Development Cooperation of the Netherlands' observation at the close of the International Forum of Parliamentarians on ICPD Review in February 1999: "Since Cairo, we have known what to do. Now, let's just do it".

Mr Ka congratulated the Interim Executive Committee of the IEPPFD for keeping alive the discussion of important population and development issues in the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe and European Parliaments. An example of this agenda has been the successful inclusion of primary health care, reproductive health care and the fight against HIV/AIDS in the new African Caribbean and Pacific-European Union Agreement (ACP-EU Agreement). He particularly referred to the work of Christine McCafferty within the British Parliament in calling on governments to honour agreed commitments in respect to devoting 0.7 % Gross National Product (GNP) to Overseas Development Aid (ODA) and to earmarking

4% of ODA budgets to reproductive health/population programmes. Mr Ka also suggested that the continued support from Denmark with its 1% of GNP contribution to ODA deserved a medal of recognition.

Mr Ka described the African and Arab World as a region rich with natural and human resources and great potential for development, but still one of the poorest regions of the world. Mr Ka mentioned epidemics such as HIV/AIDS epidemic and the Ebola virus as making a bad situation worse by putting pressure on limited health care systems and budgets of many countries, in sub-Saharan Africa in particular. Coupled with the high incidence of preventable diseases such as malaria, diarrhoea, other gastro-intestinal disorders, pulmonary tract infections, and widespread malnutrition, AIDS has increased infant and maternal mortalities and, considerably, reduced the expectation of life at birth. Of the 34 million people living with AIDS in the world over, 20 million are in Africa.

Mr Ka went on to say that two out of every three refugees and internally displaced persons in the world are Africans. From Middle East to West Africa, and from North Africa to Southern Africa, he described the region as having been torn apart by civil wars, which have led to the deaths of millions of people, and suffering and hardships to millions of others, most of them women and children. The culture of child marriages, widow inheritance, wife sharing and domestic violence against women and children prevalent in Africa and the Arab World, adds to the injuries done to the most vulnerable segment of the population. The harsh affects of environmental degradation has also affected many across Africa, and the technological advances made around the world have not – as yet – benefited the farmers of the region.

Mr Ka welcomed the draft Declaration proposed by the Interim Executive Committee of the IEPFPD and called upon governments and the international community to undertake “a new, strong initiative to address the problems created by the debt crisis and trade policies and their negative impact on reproductive health and other services”. According to Mr Ka, the poor terms of trade and unfair practices in the international market for African primary products has serious negative impact on the social, political and economic development of Africa. He said that if such resolutions were implemented, it would lead to mutual gains for all the trading partners and ensure global development for all.

Regional initiatives of the FAAPPD have included a series of workshops with the theme of ‘Harmonization of Reproductive Health and Rights Legislation’. The Afro-Arab Parliamentary Forum is emphasising rights and legislation because many in the region remain ignorant about existing legislation and statutes which affect their rights. The workshops have generated Action Plans and a framework for a Model Law for harmonization of reproductive health and rights legislation. A next step will be to help national all party committees on population and development to review existing legislation and, where appropriate, create and enforce new

legislation. A priority will be the development and protection of legislation which empowers women, young people, the aged, refugees and displaced people and people with disabilities.

At the national level, all party groups on population and development are trying to act on the Plans of Action. Workshops have been organized in Mali, Benin, and Ghana to follow up the national workshop. The interest of African parliamentarians in population and development issues has been increased greatly. Due to high turn over of members of parliamentary groups as a result of elections, Mr Ka encouraged more national level workshops to be held in the region, within the limits of available resources.

Mr Ka concluded by proposing future collaboration in the area of resource mobilisation to ensure appropriate revision, updating and enforcement of reproductive health legislation and regulations, consistent with the national laws and development priorities of the countries of Africa and the Arab World. Other priority areas for international co-operation highlighted included the provision of reproductive health information and services to young people, women and men, programmes to combat HIV/AIDS and other diseases, and the promotion of the sustainable use of terrestrial and aquatic biodiversity. Mr Ka suggested that this Paris meeting should be used a catalyst for the rapid institutionalisation of a functional Global Network of Parliamentarians on Population and Development.

ASIA

Mr Collin Hollis MP, Secretary General of the Asian Forum Of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, welcomed the IEPFPD to the growing membership of regional bodies whose commitment is to the challenge of population and development issue "With these regional groups we parliamentarians do have an international voice, [and] it is this voice that must be heard on these vital issues," he said.

Mr Hollis described his recent participation in the United Nations Millennium Summit and the need for parliamentary groups on population and development to take part in these meetings. He said that the voice of parliamentary groups must be heard at the special summit at the United Nations regarding HIV/AIDS in June of 2001.

Within the context of the Asian Forum, he said that experience has shown that the most effective means of work has been through national parliamentary groups in the region. He also indicated that real successes have been achieved where these national groups are all-party. "Parliaments, and indeed members of parliaments, come and go but it is important that the national group be on sound footing, so that regardless of election results, the national group will continue, " he explained.

Mr Hollis described the evolution of focal issues within the Asian Forum from population to much broader development issues such as gender equality, violence, food security, access to safe drinking and the impact of HIV/AIDS. He also suggested that the growing refugee situation, including the plight of environmental refugees, will become an important focal issue. Water and land degradation, said Mr Hollis, are central to security with two thirds of the world's population living in 'water scarce' or 'water stressed' areas. He also asked if the issue of food security is given sufficient emphasis, suggesting that too many people think that this issue has already been conquered despite the fact that over the next 20-30 years the world will have to double food production although water salinity, the loss of farm lands and urbanisation are destroying the possibilities for this food production.

Mr Hollis described globalisation as an issue that affects all people although "some see it as a threat and others as a way forward". He said that the Asian Forum is currently planning an international conference of parliamentarians on globalisation, population and development to ensure that globalisation is discussed and debated at national, regional and international parliamentary levels.

Mr Hollis concluded that whatever today's challenges may be – HIV/AIDS, food security, availability of water etc. – population and development issues are often at the core, and the Asian Forum hopes to work with other regional parliamentary groups in the exchange of experiences and knowledge to ensure that population and development are placed at the highest levels of all international agendas.

NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

Alvaro Alonso, Uruguayan Minister of Labour and Social Security and a member of the Board of the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (IAPG), welcomed the creation of the IEPFPD, an initiative that "will bring together parliamentarians in building a common future" he said.

Mr Alonso referred to parliamentarians as "spokespersons for our constituencies" and a potent expression of public will in the creation of legislation that reflects that will and expectation. He said that parliamentarians must mobilize support and commitment to improve women's lives and create political forces for change. In the realm of health, parliamentarians have a vital role to play in a vast array of areas that could substantially improve the quality of life for all individuals, he said.

In particular, he described the need for parliamentarians to become more involved in the fight to reduce the incidence of HIV/AIDS, and action to reduce the still high rates of maternal and

infant mortality by enabling mothers to give birth under the care and guidance of trained personnel and qualified services. He also highlighted the instrumental role of parliamentarians in helping leaders and communities recognise that violence, including gender violence, has important and life threatening health implications and that domestic violence must be identified and prevented.

Mr Alonso outlined the work that the IAPG is doing on the follow up to ICPD and the Beijing Women's Conference. The IAPG is a membership organization open to legislators from all the countries of the Americas where there is a body of elected representatives. The IAPG's overarching goal is to move population issues from their current marginal status to the centre of the political and social debate. This strategy involves not only parliamentarians but also the media and representatives of NGOs.

The IAPG has established a network of groups in the Western Hemisphere that hold active discussions on various issues and organize workshops to review national policy and programmes. The main areas of activity in the next few years will be based on the legislative commitments to sexual and reproductive health and rights made by governments at the ICPD and Beijing. (A joint IAPG/UNFPA publication *Legislative Commitments To Sexual and Reproductive Health And Rights* provides reference to these commitments.)

At the workshops and conferences that IAPG has organized, participating governments recognised that respect for sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, empowerment of women and the eradication of violence against women and girls are fundamental to human rights, poverty eradication and sustainable development. These participating governments have now made pledges in the form of commitments to crucial policy and legislative change. In this regard, IAPG has identified five priority areas for future work: violence against women, HIV/AIDS, women's decision-making power and political participation, adolescents, and trafficking of women and girls.

Mr Alonso concluded his presentation by expressing his hope that the IEPFPD will make firm commitments at regional and inter-regional levels, and that these commitments will be made promptly and with resolve. "We believe your contribution will be instrumental in raising awareness on population and development issues, including the promotion and protection of sexual and reproductive rights," he said, "and we encourage you to build comprehensive awareness and support for these issues among all individuals and institutions that will form your membership".

THE CARIBBEAN

The official launch of the Caribbean Movement of Parliamentarians for Population and Development (CMPPD) had been held in the Bahamas a few weeks before this Paris meeting. Italia Johnson, Speaker of the House of Assembly of the Bahamas and Chair of the CMPPD, described the work and mission of the CMPPD which is dedicated to the social development of all countries in the Caribbean.

The CMPPD is a network of national parliamentary committees that have been set up to foster and develop governmental and parliamentary advocacy and support for population and development issues in the Caribbean. Specifically, the CMPPD is to undertake activities that would allow it to:

- Promote new legislative initiatives or promote legislative action to strengthen existing laws to accord with national obligations arising out of membership of the international community.
- Foster awareness creation and advocacy initiatives within the political directorate at the legislative and executive branches of government as well as within the judiciary and law-enforcement groups.
- Participate in and support resource mobilization efforts internally with a view to positioning population and development as an investment in sustainable development.
- Stage conferences, meetings, roundtables, seminars and symposia to advance the social development agenda of the region.

The CMPPD also expects to facilitate local, national and regional debates among parliamentarians and in the public domain about laws, policies and programmes which seek to promote: greater access to skills development; high-quality and accessible health services; employment; substantive participation by women in society; and the protection of families and individual family members from extreme poverty and unemployment. The protection of child rights, the lobbying of governments to provide better health and social services for its citizens, especially young people and the promotion of legislative bills and enactment of laws that deal with the protection of women and children against violence are also focal programmes for the CMPPD.

In seeking the development of new policies and programmes, the CMPPD will emphasize best practices and experiences from other communities outside its own that have fostered some level of acceptance for sustainable development practice. As such, the Caribbean movement is particularly interested in forging strategic alliances with other regional parliamentary movements for population and development and related regional institutions.

Ms Johnson said that eight National Parliamentary Committees for Population and Development have now been established in the Caribbean and have now become founding members of the CMPPD. In addition, five other countries have signalled their intention to set up national parliamentary committees in the near future.

CARICOM, the regional integration movement of the Caribbean region, is similar to the European Union, and is therefore strategically placed to effect far-reaching cost effective action on the ICPD Programme of Action. CARICOM has several Councils of Ministers in the areas of Education, Health, Women's Affairs and other Human and Social Development matters, which have collectively made far reaching reform across the 15 Members States in those respective areas. CMPPD's Vision and Framework for Action will be submitted to CARICOM by The Bahamas, which, in April 1998, was appointed the CARICOM focal point for the ICPD Programme of Action.

Ms Johnson concluded by reporting that the initiative to establish a Caribbean Movement of Parliamentarians for Population and Development, has, in a very short time, strategically engaged the major players and stakeholders in the Caribbean region in strategic action on the ICPD *Programme of Action*. In a Statement of Support to the IEPFPD Johnson said that the CMPPD "stands side by side with you...in the determined struggle to ensure pertinent issues are adequately addressed by all levels of society".

TOWARDS CAIRO +10: PRIORITIES IN SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS

The speeches from the participating regional parliamentary forums were followed by presentations from the leading authorities in sexual and reproductive health and rights, namely the United Nations Population Fund, the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) and the European Network of the IPPF.

Mr Kunio Waki, Deputy Executive Director of UNFPA, said that the last five years has seen concerted efforts to integrate family planning services into broad and inclusive reproductive health services while ensuring that neglected areas such as safe motherhood are given appropriate attention. He indicated that this movement towards integrated reproductive health strengthens all areas of health care reform.

Mr Waki referred to the Review of ICPD and the Key Future Actions for the further implementation of the *Programme of Action*. Targets in this ratified action plan include the halving of the 1990 illiteracy rate of women by 2005, the halving of unmet need for family

planning by 2005 and to eliminate it altogether by 2015, and the reduction of HIV infections amongst young people by one quarter by the year 2010.

Mr Waki outlined the important role of advocacy on the part of political leaders and parliamentarians and the strengthening of partnerships with civil society to mobilize support for the implementation of the *Programme of Action*. In many countries, UNFPA has fostered partnerships between governments and civil society organizations to undertake advocacy activities and improve service delivery. Mr Waki reaffirmed UNFPA's belief that parliamentary forums are effective mechanisms to exchange experience, to learn from each other and to mobilize both political and financial resources for the achievement of goals agreed by the international community.

Mr Waki concluded by saying that he was most gratified to witness the growing strength and interaction of parliamentarians worldwide, "united in their concern about population, reproductive health and development issues and united in their willingness to take action". Mr Waki welcomed the launch of the IEPFPD and its important new voice in the national and international dialogue about population and development. With reference to a recent UNFPA consultative meeting on meeting reproductive health commodity needs, he reminded all participants that the actual provision and distribution of commodities must be a priority for all partners in reproductive health programmes.

Ms Ingar Brueggemann, Director General of IPPF, described family planning as one of the success stories of development but a success story that still needed greater support. She said that one of the many facets to the successes and compromises of the implementation of the ICPD *Programme of Action* has been the involvement of women in decision-making processes. "From governmental to grass roots levels women remain a minority voice," she said, going on to describe the vital work that many women leaders are doing at grassroots levels but often with insufficient resources and a lack of political support.

Ms Brueggemann described the long European tradition of gender equality that is reflected in legal and social practice, suggesting that the IEPFPD should take this example forward and ensure that other governments and policy makers recognise the real needs of women, men and young people and promote governance that will support those needs. She concluded by reminding parliamentarians of the powerful role they play in being able to bring the 'difficult' issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights into a political debate and the opportunities to lobby for greater budgetary commitment to reproductive health programmes both domestically and around the world.

Ms Lyn Thomas, Director of the IPPF European Network, said that Europe has some of the most sophisticated, and some of the least developed systems and regulations relating to sexual and reproductive health and rights. She said that across Europe it was important to never become complacent about what has been achieved, and also to make all efforts to place sexual and reproductive health and rights on political, health and social agendas where this has not yet occurred.

Ms Thomas described how existing reproductive health legislation and practice is questioned and queried at parliamentary and other levels on a regular basis in many European countries. She said that defence of existing legislation and promotion of new legislation and practice requires the participation of parliamentarians and that European Family Planning Associations are eager to support any parliamentary activities in their countries. She concluded by saying that the IEPFPD provides an opportunity to work with other regional parliamentary forums to create international consensus and solidarity of purpose.

Discussions following these presentations focussed on the need for greater communication at national and international levels. Ms Italia Johnson said that although there are many different needs in different parts of the world, basic information about sexual and reproductive health and rights was still not reaching many people around the world. It was agreed that communication and sharing of experiences – for instance between West and Eastern Europe – was an important and cost effective way forward. Ms Elena Poptodorova (Bulgaria) said that it can be extremely time consuming working to get the media to highlight reproductive health but that the media remain an important prospective ally in all communications initiatives.

Ms Brueggemann pointed to the problem of a lack of common language and terminology that limits the dissemination of relevant information. She also said that it is at national levels that programmes must succeed and there was therefore a need to fully respect and understand local needs and local expectations, but also that some ‘cultural’ issues do prohibit the empowerment of women and young people.

Discussion also turned to countries with low birth rates where the concept of family planning is sometimes contentious. Again the issue of using the right language and means of communication was discussed, and also the need to create social and economic situations where women may feel better able to have a child or children.

Responding to questions from the floor, Mr Waki said that UNFPA's new office in Bratislava has been established to create stronger links with local partners, and also that UNFPA Goodwill Ambassadors were creating important publicity for the work of UNFPA. Ms Thomas said that programmes of exchange must be designed to be sustainable and in recognition of existing

work being done in Europe. She referred specifically to FPA exchanges between Finland and the Baltic countries that have provided training for doctors and other professionals.

WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Before the workshops started, all participants were given a draft IEPFPD Declaration of Intent. Workshop chairs were asked to focus workshop discussions around the draft Declaration and provide any recommendations for changes and or additions to the Declaration that came from the discussions during the workshops.

The three workshops had the themes of twinning between parliamentary groups, the role of parliamentarians within a regional context, and parliamentary and NGO partnerships.

WORKSHOP ONE: TWINNING BETWEEN PARLIAMENTARY GROUPS

Co-Chairs:

Kent Harsted, MP Sweden

Rosemary Yikona, MP Zambia

Katarina Lindahl, Executive Director RFSU

Participants:

Mr Hollis, MP Australia, AFPPD

Ms Johnson, MP The Bahamas, CMPPD

Ms Vehkaoja, MP Finland IEPFPD

Ms Henry, Senator Ireland

Ms Jalloul, MP Lebanon

Ms Fertuzinhos, MP Portugal

Ms Reznik , Counsellor at the State Duma of the Russian Federation

Mr Gerasimenko, MP Russia

Ms Genner , Switzerland

Ms McCafferty , United Kingdom

Mr Alonso , IAPG Uruguay

Mrs Brueggemann , Director General IPPF

Ms Heisecke , IPPF EN

Mr Sanhueza , Regional Director IPPF Western, Hemisphere Region

Mr Waki , Deputy Executive Director UNFPZ

Ms Neblett , UNFPA Caribbean

Ms Vuorenmaa, Vaestoliitto

The workshop started with a brief description of the twinning programme between Zambia and Sweden, a project run by the Swedish Family Planning Association (RFSU) and funded by the Hewlett Foundation.

RFSU Executive Director, Ms Katarina Lindahl explained that the main aim of the project was to create partnership between Swedish and Zambian MPs. It is essential that Swedish MPs understand that it is their responsibility to keep the issue of sexual and reproductive health and rights on the table in Parliament and the twinning project has worked well in this respect. Experience has shown that there must be a good climate for dialogue between the twinning countries so that there is a mutual feeling of giving and taking. Through this twinning project RFSU has created opportunity for Swedish and Zambian MPs to see the reality in Zambia. According to Lindahl, it is not always the case that local officials in high positions are aware of the reality in their own country.

RFSU's main focus is adolescent sexuality and sexuality education, and RFSU's international work in Zambia, Vietnam and Tanzania had shown that children and young people ask the same questions all over the world. The project has given individuals and also those involved in the project a much greater understanding of sex and sexuality, and also the opportunity to discuss these issues with local policy makers and parliamentarians – a scenario that had not occurred before.

Ms Rosemary Yikona, Zambian MP involved in the twinning project, described the many benefits of this experience that have included a new political commitment to HIV prevention programmes in Zambia. Amongst a number of decisions currently being made in Zambia are comprehensive sex education in Zambian schools and the prohibition of prostitution.

Kent Harsted, a Swedish MP who has visited Zambia on this project, admitted that it has been difficult to encourage discussion of sexual and reproductive health and rights in the Swedish Parliament and to get more MPs engaged. MPs today are inundated with information and often find it hard to find the time to take on new agendas such as development co-operation. However, he congratulated RFSU on its lobbying of Swedish MPs and the support provided to all the MPs both on the study tours and also back at home. "A real sense commitment was created and the feeling that this engagement is meaningful," he said. The new Swedish all-party group will become a strong force within the Swedish Parliament and significant and progressive discussions about sexual and reproductive health and rights are now taking place within the Swedish Parliament. The importance of friendships and sense of common purpose that now exists between Zambian and Swedish parliamentarians was stressed .

From an NGO perspective, there are five important outcomes and lessons from the twinning project: peer education is a forceful tool (between MPs, NGOs etc.); relevant MPs are much more engaged; NGOs can easily provide knowledge to MPs and other target groups; friendship is important to be able to speak openly; and finally that NGOs have to accept that MPs are not part of their NGO but important allies.

Hernan Sanhueza, Regional Director of IPPF's Western Hemisphere Region, said that study tours really do give a sense of reality and that it is important to select MPs carefully for participation on these tours. There is a need to identify those MPs which can "advertise" issues to others in their Parliament, and secretariat support was important in this follow up. A credible secretariat which is well respected by MPs is an important part of the equation towards success. Italia Johnson said that in the Bahamas the Ministry of Health has taken the role of secretariat for the Caribbean Group. This situation does let policy-makers discuss relevant issues in arenas not open to NGOs but politicians should support NGOs and create open dialogue she said.

Some suggested that in addition to twinning of countries, similar professional relationships should be created around issues such as low birth rates and youth. Others said that it is important to always bear in mind the target audiences and MPs are not necessarily the best group to reach young people. "Youth sexuality is a very potent thing with which many of us MPs have not come to terms with," one participant stated. Another workshop participant said that it will be impossible to know the real needs of young people and suggested a European Forum for young people to discuss these issues. There was a need to identify strong institutions such as the Scouts and work with them on the dissemination of relevant information and messages about quality of life and opportunity. On this issue of youth involvement, it was suggested that any programme must be planned with care to ensure that they have real meaning and resonance.

Alvaro Alonso said there are four regional organizations already doing twinning operations in North and South America. It is important to share information about these projects so that there is no duplication, and to ensure maximum use of politicians valuable and often limited time. Discussion also focussed on administration and exactly how much time some NGOs spend on organizing twinning and other projects. One parliamentarian also said that MPs should not forget how much time administration can take on twinning and other projects. Marjatta Vehkaoja said that the all-party group in Finland would not exist without the help of Finnish NGOs. She also suggested that all those with experience of all-party groups should share this experience with those European countries that do not as yet have such groups.

The Chair provided the following recommendations back to the plenary meeting:

- Twinning should not only be used among different groups but also on specific issues
- Media should be involved and realised that it has strong force
- We should not shy away from youth issues
- NGOs should be used as back-up
- Continuity should be stressed
- When talking on sexual and reproductive health and rights issues we should have a holistic view

WORKSHOP TWO: THE ROLE OF PARLIAMENTARIANS IN A REGIONAL CONTEXT

Co-Chairs:

Youssef Sangaré, MP Burkina Faso

Robert Toubon ; Equilibres et Populations

Participants

Mr Touré, MP Mali

Ms Mindicanu , MP Moldova

Mr Ka, MP Senegal FAAPPD

Ms Blanco, MP Spain

Ms Meyer Kaelin, MP Switzerland

Mr de Sainte-Lorette, Equilibres et Populations

Ms Rosa, Marie Stopes International

Mr Datta, IEPFPD / IPPF EN

Ms Barthélémy , MFPP

Ms Dantez , MFPP

Ms Laurant , MFPP

Ms Lugli, UNFPA

This workshop was conducted in French and focussed on the work of parliamentarians working at regional and international levels in national and regional all-party groups. The group included a number of African parliamentarians who shared information on initiatives in West Africa to eradicate the practice of female genital mutilation (FGM).

In countries such as Burkina Faso, Mali and Senegal parliamentarians have developed model legislation concerning FGM and are conducting workshops to discuss the implementation of this legislation in a number of countries in the region. Workshop participants agreed that this harmonization of laws was an important innovative model which could well be replicated in other regions of the world.

This discussion extended to the role of parliamentarians as legislators and the important work to be done in the monitoring of the implementation of the ICPD *Programme of Action*. The general themes of ICPD are being monitored in African countries but in Europe these has been no such initiative shown at a regional level. It was recommended that European all-party groups create such a system of evaluation based on the expectations of the *Programme of Action*.

Similarly, it was agreed that parliamentarians have an important role to play in the monitoring of governmental budgets that affect sexual and reproductive health programmes both domestically and within the context of overseas development assistance. It was agreed that interventions should be made where health and other budgets are not being used to provide effective solutions to the sexual and reproductive health needs of individuals. One suggestion from the group elaborated on this theme and suggested that parliamentarians in the developing world should monitor domestic budgets on HIV and AIDS prevention and parliamentarians in the developed world should monitor overseas development assistance. This would be an initiative that could be fed into the 20/20 initiative, the World Bank's initiatives and programme funding, and other regional agendas such as the Cotonou Agreement. These suggestions generated a recommendation that the effects of globalisation be referred to in the Declaration, and with specific reference to the negative effects that globalisation has on women and also migrants.

The workshop also focussed on the role of families and the important issue that some sexual and reproductive health groups are seen as 'anti-family'. Again a recommendation was made that this issue be highlighted in the Declaration along with the important support systems that families – in all their forms - do provide to many people.

WORKSHOP THREE: PARLIAMENTARY AND NGO PARTNERSHIPS

Co-Chairs:

Elena Poptodorova

Dilys Cossey

Participants

Mr Bejtja, MP Albania

Mr Tadevosyan, MP Armenia

Ms Sandbaek , MEP European Parliament - Denmark

Ms Gvazava , MP Georgia

Ms Reinhardt , MP Germany

Ms Schwarcz, MP Hungary

Ms Ogmundsdottir , MP Iceland
Ms Paegle , MP Latvia
Mr Olekas , MP Lithuania
Ms Pasternak , MP Poland
Ms Bartos , MP Romania
Mr McNulty, MSP Scotland
Ms Hryhorovych , MP Ukraine
Ms Bennour, IPPF Arab World Region
Ms Thomas, Regional Director IPPF European Network
Ms Hansen, IPPF EN
Ms Bartley, Population Concern
Ms Haines, UK APPG
Mr Palstra, UNFPA

Workshop Chair Elena Poptodorova firstly described the situation in Bulgaria where the process of creating an all-party group on sexual and reproductive health has been hard. She said awareness amongst politicians of the state of sexual and reproductive health in Bulgaria is not good, and there are also too few politicians prepared to generate discussion on these issues. She suggested that parliamentarians need to be made aware of the benefits of being part of a relevant all party group, and also that these groups maintain an all-party status. The nascent all-party group in Bulgaria needed to create a practical and proactive relationship with the Family Planning Association, other NGOs and relevant governmental bodies and ministries she said.

Ulla Sandbaek MEP said that much of the success of the European Union working group on population and development was thanks to the support provided by Marie Stopes International in co-ordinating meetings, organizing agendas and making contacts with other NGOs and interested groups. A strong secretariat is important and provides continuity for any all-party group. All-party groups should work on global issues and participate in different committees and systems where relevant and study tours remain an important way of engaging parliamentarians and their study tour experiences often make them more personally involved in the issues.

Vaera Paegle (Latvia) agreed that the principles of establishing all-party groups was important but that there are many other groups and committees that contest for a politician's time. She therefore suggested that the benefits of involvement must be clear, and also that there were specific issues such as under population that needed to be addressed within the context of Central and Eastern Europe. Mr Gagik Tadevosyan from Armenia said parliamentarians in his country are eager to establish a group but they needed assistance and communication with

other groups, especially concerning the discussion of issues such as abortion and education of young people concerning contraception. Mr Nikolai Gerasimenko (Russia) said current political debate in Russia does focus on low birth rates and ignores other sexual and reproductive health issues, but he said he was in the process of trying to create an all-party group with clear guidelines and agendas. This progress had, he said, been adversely affected by the vigorous work of the pro-life movement in Russia.

Mr Xavier Auclair from Equilibres et Populations reported that French parliamentarians are very interested in population and development issues, from an academic and practical interest and standpoint. The two French all-party groups co-ordinate activities between the domestic and the international scene, e.g. policies relating to overseas aid and overseas and French territories, and also act as research groups on relevant issues, he said.

Des McNulty from Scotland has worked with World Health Organisation and other European health networks. He said that these pan-European groups often have difficulties in defining their roles and areas of interest. Erika Reinhardt from Germany said that, being the first of its kind in Europe, the IEPFPD needs to establish firm agendas from the outset. UNFPA's Eric Palstra said that the IEPFPD must learn from the experiences of other regional groups also forge links with other international organizations such as the Council of Europe.

Elizabeth Bennour from the IPPF Arab World Region said that Arab World FPAs have all pioneered family planning in their respective countries but there is not a strong link with parliamentarians. She did suggest that parliamentarians are becoming more open, but that a clear and comprehensive agenda was required when approaching parliamentarians for their support.

Gudrun Ogmundsdottir from Iceland said her country has a huge problem with teenage pregnancies and abortion rates and parliamentarians have been very active on this issue. There have been a number of proposals and debates in the Icelandic Parliament about contraception and have been trying to get free contraception to girls under 20 years old. She said that it is very important to work with other groups on this issue and the new European Forum was an excellent way to do this. She also said that 38% of the Parliament in Iceland are women and that while women may start the movement it is important for the men to carry it forward.

Lilyia Hryhorovych from the Ukraine said there are 36 women within the Ukrainian Government who have good working relationships with NGOs but that any new all-party group needed a precise status in the eyes of all involved. Tibor Schwarcz from Hungary said there is a problem with the concept of cross-party groups in his country, and that while NGOs have

made progress the role of NGOs and civil society in the political arena remains weak. The participants agreed that much was to be achieved through clear communication and creating a public and political arena for the discussion of all facets of sexual and reproductive health and rights. NGOs do not have the political instruments to enforce action, and it was for all-party groups to use their political influence to create positive changes.

Parliamentary Expert Dilys Cossey said existing platforms such as the ICPD *Programme of Action* must be used as a context for future work. The ever expanding remit of the UK All Party Group in efforts to remain relevant and at the cutting edge of debate on sexual and reproductive health and rights serve as a good example to other all party groups. Lyn Thomas concluded by indicating that the IPPF European Network was happy to provide a supportive role in the establishment of national all-party groups but that the long term funding of these initiatives was a priority that needed careful consideration.

DECLARATION DISCUSSION AND ADOPTION

All three working groups reported back to plenary with general and specific recommendations for the Declaration. Some time was spent in debating the issue of pan-European values and their relative resonance at specific national levels. There was also some discussion about the negative and positive impact of globalisation, and also the place of 'traditional' values and the family within the context of individual sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The Declaration was accepted by all participating members of the IEPFPD and other European members of parliaments and went from draft to final text at this last session of the meeting.