PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT AT THE NAIROBI SUMMIT ON ICPD25

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NAIROBI SUMMIT ON ICPD25

From 12-14 November, over 200 Parliamentarians from around the world participated in the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25 - the most important meeting on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in 25 years.

The governments of Kenya and Denmark and UNFPA co-convened the Summit, which brought together advocates dedicated to achieving sexual and reproductive health and rights for everyone, everywhere. The high-level conference mobilized political and financial commitments, centred around achieving:

“\textit{We have come to Nairobi because good progress is not good enough. The reproductive rights of women and girls are not up for negotiation.}”

Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, UNFPA

The ICPD Programme of Action, adopted by 179 governments in 1994, issued a clarion call to place women’s needs and rights at the centre of population and development policies. What the world needed, governments agreed, was to provide women, couples and families with access to a range of sexual and reproductive health interventions, and to realise social and economic changes that could empower women, respect their rights and help the world move towards gender equality.

ICPD’s 25th anniversary presented a unique opportunity for the global community to build on the ICPD framework and fully commit to realising a visionary agenda for sexual and reproductive health and rights, and to reaching those who have been left behind.

The achievement of the ICPD goals will depend on the political will to fill the gaps in laws, policies and funding. Only with the support of parliamentarians can this political will be built.
Political will and leadership are fundamental to improving women’s access to sexual and reproductive health and rights information, education and services. **Parliamentarians have a key role to play in positioning and promoting ICPD** through their representative, legislative, budgetary and oversight roles. The 25th anniversary of the ICPD was a unique opportunity to inspire action, and to mobilise the political will and financial commitments that we urgently need to finally and fully implement the ICPD Programme of Action and meet the SDGs by 2030.

EPF organised a Parliamentary Forum (MP Forum) each day of the Summit, **gathering over 200 Parliamentarians from over 100 countries around the world** and across the political spectrum. What united these MPs? A common commitment to advancing the health and rights of women and girls everywhere. For each of the 3 days of the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, parliamentarians gathered together at the MP Forum to discuss the most critical issues surrounding the health, rights and development of the world’s most vulnerable.

206 Parliamentarians from 101 countries attended the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25

120 Parliamentarians are now members of the Global Parliamentary Alliance (GPA)
Every day is a tragedy for the 830 women who die while giving life; for the 33,000 girls forced into child marriage and for the 11,000 girls whose genitals were cut.

Every statistic is a real life trauma for the nearly one in five women or girls who will be assaulted by their partner this year; the 5 million pregnant women who have been displaced by conflict or disaster and are in need of medical care; or the 214 million women around the world who cannot prevent pregnancy because they cannot access the contraceptives they want.

The world we imagine can be a reality, but it requires more than hope. It requires conviction, courage, partnership and dedication from us all. Parliamentarians have a key role to play in accelerating progress towards the world we imagine.

The MP Forum on health aimed to enable a dialogue among parliamentarians on the successes, challenges and obstacles in advancing women’s and girls’ health on a global scale, and perhaps most importantly, what specific actions parliamentarians can take to promote the health of women and girls globally.
“Efforts to improve health, individuals’ rights and development have fallen short in many countries due to underlying economic, political, social and cultural constraints or ideologically-driven campaigns.”

Hon. Petra Bayr, MP, Austria

“As a country we have identified a number of problems that are related to women’s health. One is the issue of maternal mortality. It remains a big challenge in this country”.

Hon. Gideon Ochanda, MP, Kenya

“We must not give up until no mother has to give up her daughter to an early and forced marriage, either due to outdated cultures or due to economic pressures. We as legislators and parliamentarians must not rest.”

Sen. Johnson Arthur Sakaja, Senator for Nairobi County, Chair of Labour Women and Youth Committee
“We want to come up with a world where every woman and girl without distinction or discrimination can enjoy their full reproductive health and rights”.

Mr. Martin Chungong, Secretary General, Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU)

“We must strive to ensure that our governments respect their commitment to health for all, because the issue of universal health coverage is not just a public health issue or a matter of budget appropriation”.

Hon. Marie Rose Nguini Effa, MP, Cameroon

“Investing in sexual and reproductive health pays dividends across the rest of the SDG agenda: in gender equality, economic empowerment and social and economic development as a whole for the country.”

Dr. Anshu Banerjee, Director, Maternal, Newborn & Adolescent’s Health and Ageing, WHO
Access to safe, voluntary family planning is a human right. It is central to gender equality and women’s empowerment, and is key in reducing poverty. Yet in developing regions, some 214 million women who want to avoid pregnancy are not using safe and effective family planning methods. Around 200 million girls and women alive today have undergone some form of Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), and globally, one in every five girls is married, or in union, before reaching age 18.

Parliamentarians at the MP Forum were discussing how to end harmful practices by engaging whole communities and focusing on human rights and gender equality. How to respond to the anti-gender movement and ‘macho politics’ were also addressed.
“I call on Parliamentarians at the Nairobi Summit MP Forum to: Firstly, demonstrate your commitment by sponsoring and supporting policies promoting SRHR, secondly; prioritise financing for SRHR and UHC, and thirdly; listen to women and girls in your communities and elevate their voices.”

Ms. Ann Starrs, Director of Family Planning, Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

“We’re in an era of macho politics. It’s more necessary than ever to create partnerships and join forces for the rights of women & girls”.

Dr. Alvaro Bermejo, Director General, IPPF

“Unequal health outcomes due to unequal access is itself a human rights abuse”.

Dr. Shannon Hader, Deputy Executive Director for Programmes, UNAIDS
“Born we are all free, and equal in dignity and in rights. It is time to make that commitment a reality for everyone, everywhere”.

Mr. Rajat Khosla, Human Rights Adviser for Department of Reproductive Health Research, WHO

“There is a systematic and permanent orchestrated attack on human rights. Only through joining forces on international and regional levels and with all progressive groups such as those fighting for gender equality, LGBT, climate change and other movements, will we succeed in safeguarding girls and women’s rights.”.

Hon. Josué Godoy, MP, El Salvador

“Today I saw so many of you so eager to share your best practices. We have a lot of challenges, but at the end of the day we should never tire.”

Hon. Esther Passaris, Member of the National Assembly of Kenya and Women and Human Rights Activist
Gender equality is a precondition for advancing development and reducing poverty. Empowered women contribute to the health and productivity of whole families and communities, and they improve prospects for the next generation.

The MP Forum on development focused on specific actions parliamentarians can take to shape, advance and implement the sustainable development agenda within their countries and beyond. How to mobilise sufficient resources to family planning, and how to incorporate it into universal health coverage, as well as promoting gender equality were among the topics discussed.
“Currently 232 million women of reproductive age in developing regions who want to avoid pregnancy are not using a modern contraceptive method. For every dollar you invest in family planning, you get over 120 dollars in return”.

Gifty Addico, Chief Commodity Security Branch, UNFPA, Family Planning and Reproductive Health Supplies

“Evidenced-based data is crucial to accelerate the ICPD programme of action made in Cairo so that no one is left behind. Let us continue marching together”.

Hon. Hitoshi Kikawada, Member of the House of Representatives of Japan
“Gender equality will be achieved with the engagement of the whole society: men, youth, civil society and political leaders”.

Hon. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, MEP, France

“Everyone in this room has the power and the responsibility to advocate for the implementation of policy that will advance gender equality”.

Ms. Susan Papp, Managing Director of Policy and Advocacy, Women Deliver

“UHC cannot be achieved without the full access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services”.

Dr. Ian Askew, Director of the Department of Reproductive Health and Research, WHO
On 13 November, EPF launched an independent, global initiative: the Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health, Rights and Development (GPA), with the objective of providing a platform for parliamentarians from around the world to advocate for better health care, expanding human rights and to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both in their home countries and abroad.

Guided by an Advisory Group selected by their peers, GPA is a flexible parliamentary initiative aimed at boosting parliamentarians’ efforts to deliver on the SDGs, specifically in the areas of health and human rights. During the GPA launch, 48 parliamentarians signed up, totalling **120 members of the GPA from 72 different countries** from all regions of the world.

Former Prime Minister of New Zealand, the Rt. Hon. Helen Clark spoke at the launch of the Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health, Rights & Development. Having served 27.5 years as an MP, she congratulated parliamentarians on this global initiative for the world’s most vulnerable.
“Parliamentarians have a duty to hold governments to account, through parliamentarian committees, through budget examination and they need support do that. I think the alliance can be very important providing them with that support”.

Rt. Hon. Helen Clark, Former Prime Minister of New Zealand

“MPs contributions are absolutely crucial to enact human rights and give everyone the possibility to enjoy all sexual and reproductive rights as they are simply human rights.”

Hon. Petra Bayr, MP, Austria, EPF Vice-President
“I consider an alliance among parliamentarians absolutely strategic and we do need it”.

Hon. Laura Boldrini, MP, Italy, Former Speaker of the Chamber of Deputies, GPA Advisory Group member

“We have a window of opportunity as parliamentarians to make sure that SRHR is embedded in the government plan to have a comprehensive universal health coverage that includes SRHR”.

Hon. Hala Abou-Ali, MP, Egypt, GPA Advisory Group member
“We all come from different political persuasions, and I believe that we can change the system if, in our own political parties, we are able to write in our party manifesto, the issue of SRHR”.

Hon. Robert Kuganab-Lem, MP, Ghana, GPA Advisory Group member

“As parliamentarian I represent the people. This alliance for parliamentarians is very important because each one of us from our regions experience different issues based on different cultures, beliefs, and religion. So it’s important for members of parliaments to share their experience, more so, to add value to each other”.

Hon. Sabina Chege, MP, Kenya
The session had an intergenerational and interactive approach to foster dialogue among parliamentarians of a range of ages while soliciting feedback and questions from attendees. The young parliamentarians shared ideas on how they can shape opportunities for the advancement of sexual and reproductive health within their mandates.

The event was convened by UNFPA in collaboration with the Global Parliamentary Alliance (GPA), an initiative of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF), the World Health Organization and the International Parliamentary Union (IPU).

“We have had enough talk, debates and philosophy. Now it is time to act and to deliver. This is not just another summit, another conference. I am expecting concrete steps to come out of this”.

Hon. Bojan Glavasevic, MP, Croatia
This session highlighted the importance of scaling up domestic funding by showcasing innovative ‘best-buy’ financing partnerships that have worked to advance and sustain the ICPD agenda. The event was convened by the Global Parliamentary Alliance, an initiative of the European Parliamentary Forum for Sexual and Reproductive Rights, in collaboration with UNFPA, Southern African Development Community Parliamentary Forum, Open Consultants, and Advance Family Planning (John Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health).

At the end of the sessions, Sen. Alice Mary Higgins from Ireland and Hon. Christopher Kalila from Zambia shared lessons learned and best practices from their countries.

“Tajikistan is one of the leading countries that has created a permanent National Committee on Population and Development under the Republic of Tajikistan to implement the ICPD Platform for Action.”

H.E Khairiniso Yusufi of the Parliament of the Republic of Tajikistan
Political initiatives that entirely oppose SRHR at the normative and programmatic level have recently increased in their intensity despite 25 years of progress on the ICPD. This session considered the design and strategy of the far-right policy agenda on SRHR, based on the value system of those who advocate viewpoints that restrict rights and choices for all. The session contextualized the phenomenon in the wider anti-gender movement and uncovered the proliferation, tentacles and tactics of opposition movements against SRHR worldwide. It provided a platform for progressive actors to consider solutions that can respond to and counter ideologies that seek to inhibit ICPD and undermine progress towards the SDGs. This session is convened by African Parliamentary Forum on P&D; EPF; South Africa Development Community Parliamentary Forum.

“No issue is spared. Widely accepted rights like divorce and access to contraception are also targeted.”

Neil Datta, EPF secretary
Parliamentarians’ Field Visit
FAMILY HEALTH OPTIONS OF KENYA (FHOK)
15 November 2019

Parliamentarians from Belgium, Croatia, Ireland, Sweden and the UK visited Family Health Options Kenya’s first ever family planning clinic, which was set up in 1962. The organisation has seen a substantial improvement in the nation’s sexual and reproductive health.

Today FHOK delivers a comprehensive range of SRH services. These include contraception, emergency contraception, antenatal and post-natal services, and post-abortion care. Kenya has a significant HIV and AIDS prevalence rate, and much of FHOK’s work concentrates on the prevention of HIV, and the detection and management of the virus (via referrals to laboratories for CD4 counts and the provision of antiretrovirals).

“They come for the gym but find out about our on-site clinic offering advice and contraception.”

FHOK volunteer
NAIROBI STATEMENT ON ICPD25:
ACCELERATING THE PROMISE

14 November 2019

Introduction

Twenty-five years ago, in 1994, 179 countries adopted a landmark Programme of Action during the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo, Egypt. The ICPD Programme of Action transformed the way in which the linkages between population, poverty reduction and sustainable development were addressed – by putting the rights, needs and aspirations of individual human beings at the center of sustainable development. The 179 countries promised to strive for achieving universal access to sexual and reproductive health, for all, by no later than 2015; to achieve infant mortality rates below 35 per 1,000 live births and under-5 mortality rates below 45 per 1,000 live births by 2015; and a 75 per cent reduction of the maternal mortality rate by 2015. In 2010, the UN General Assembly extended this promise beyond the 20-year timeframe given in the ICPD Programme of Action in order to “fully meet its goals and objectives”. In 2014, the UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD) took note of the outcome documents of the regional conferences on population and development, stating that each outcome provided region-specific guidance on population and development beyond 2014 for each region that adopted the particular outcome document. In 2015, the international community also reaffirmed the commitment of putting “people, planet and prosperity” at the center of sustainable development and leaving no one behind, when it adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). And, on 1 April 2019, the UN member states adopted a Declaration during the 52nd session of the UN Commission on Population and Development that reaffirmed the importance of the ICPD Programme of Action for guiding population and development policies and programmes, within the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and pledged to undertake further actions to ensure its “full, effective and accelerated implementation”.

The future of sustainable development is directly linked to fulfilling the aspirations of adolescents and youth. Empowering the world’s 1.8 billion young people and unleashing their full potential to contribute to economic and social progress will be instrumental for bringing the vision and the promise the ICPD Programme of Action and of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development to life.

Moreover, the achievement of sustainable, just and inclusive development must be based on actions that meet the needs and aspirations of all. Consequently, governments, that embraced the ICPD Programme of Action 25 years ago, and reaffirmed it in subsequent intergovernmental fora and reviews, should continue to invest in its full and accelerated implementation, and support concrete actions to that effect, within the overall context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Furthermore, to fulfill the unfinished business of the ICPD Programme of Action and enable the guarantee and respect for human rights everywhere around the world, strengthening civil society organizations and movements who have defended it and worked for its implementation is necessary and crucial. This means that those organizations, movements, institutions and individuals must be able to work freely in a safe environment, including through the active protection of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and human rights defenders.
The way forward

We, representing all nations and peoples, and all segments of our societies, meet at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, from 12 to 14 November 2019, in Kenya, to present our own ambitious commitments with concrete and innovative actions that will accelerate the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, leaving no one behind, ensuring rights and choices for all.

Despite remarkable progress over the past 25 years, the promise of the ICPD Programme of Action remains a distant reality for millions of people across the world. Universal access to the full range of sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, as defined in the ICPD Programme of Action and the Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, has not been achieved. We acknowledge that unless we complete the unfinished business of the ICPD Programme of Action and realize the strong and evidence-based investment case for ensuring sexual and reproductive health and rights for all, and for girls’ and women’s empowerment and gender equality, reaching the ambitious SDGs by 2030 will be difficult, if not impossible.

Our world has, in many ways, profoundly changed over the last 25 years, and many new issues are influencing the field of population and development, including climate change, growing inequalities and exclusion within and between countries, migration, the youth bulge and the prospects of demographic dividends, and increasing demographic diversity.

Advancing the ICPD Programme of Action’s promise of universal access to sexual and reproductive health - of girls’ and women’s empowerment and gender equality, while leaving no one behind, in particular youth as agents of positive change and the leaders of the generation to carry forward the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, requires new, innovative and strategic partnerships, including with and between youth, civil society organizations, local communities, the private sector, and through south-south and triangular cooperation among countries.

Therefore, recognizing our different capacities and responsibilities, our way forward is to focus in particular on those actions, expressed in specific commitments and collaborative actions, that will deliver on the promise of the ICPD Programme of Action, the Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, and the outcomes of its reviews, and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. In that context, we will:

1. Intensify our efforts for the full, effective and accelerated implementation and funding of the ICPD Programme of Action, Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the ICPD, the outcomes of its reviews, and Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

In particular, in order to:

Achieve universal access to sexual and reproductive health and rights as a part of universal health coverage (UHC), by committing to strive for

2. Zero unmet need for family planning information and services, and universal availability of quality, accessible, affordable and safe modern contraceptives.

3. Zero preventable maternal deaths, and maternal morbidities, such as obstetric fistulas, by, inter alia, integrating a comprehensive package of sexual and reproductive health interventions, including access to safe abortion to the full extent of the law, measures for preventing and avoiding unsafe abortions, and for the provision of post-abortion care, into national UHC strategies, policies and programmes, and to protect and ensure all individuals’ right to
bodily integrity, autonomy and reproductive rights, and to provide access to essential services in support of these rights.

4. Access for all adolescents and youth, especially girls, to comprehensive and age-responsive information, education and adolescent-friendly comprehensive, quality and timely services to be able to make free and informed decisions and choices about their sexuality and reproductive lives, to adequately protect themselves from unintended pregnancies, all forms of sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, to facilitate a safe transition into adulthood.

Address sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, in particular child, early and forced marriages and female genital mutilation, by committing to strive for

5. (a) Zero sexual and gender-based violence and harmful practices, including zero child, early and forced marriage, as well as zero female genital mutilation. (b) Elimination of all forms of discrimination against all women and girls, in order to realize all individuals’ full socio-economic potential.

Mobilize the required financing to finish the ICPD Programme of Action and sustain the gains already made, by

6. Using national budget processes, including gender budgeting and auditing, increasing domestic financing and exploring new, participatory and innovative financing instruments and structures to ensure full, effective and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action.

7. Increasing international financing for the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, to complement and catalyze domestic financing, in particular of sexual and reproductive health programmes, and other supportive measures and interventions that promote gender equality and girls’ and women’s empowerment.

Draw on demographic diversity to drive economic growth and achieve sustainable development, by

8. Investing in the education, employment opportunities, health, including family planning and sexual and reproductive health services, of adolescents and youth, especially girls, so as to fully harness the promises of the demographic dividend.

9. Building peaceful, just and inclusive societies, where no one is left behind, where all, irrespective of race, color, religion, sex, age, disability, language, ethnic origin, sexual orientation and gender identity or expression, feel valued and are able to shape their own destiny and contribute to the prosperity of their societies.

10. Providing quality, timely and disaggregated data, that ensures privacy of citizens and is also inclusive of younger adolescents, investing in digital health innovations, including in big data systems, and improvement of data systems to inform policies aimed at achieving sustainable development.

11. Committing to the notion that nothing about young people’s health and well-being can be discussed and decided upon without their meaningful involvement and participation (“nothing about us, without us”).

Uphold the right to sexual and reproductive health services in humanitarian and fragile contexts, by

12. Ensuring that the basic humanitarian needs and rights of affected populations, especially that of girls and women, are ad-
addressed as critical components of responses to humanitarian and environmental crises, as well as fragile and post-crisis reconstruction contexts, through the provision of access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information, education and services, including access to safe abortion services to the full extent of the law, and post-abortion care, to significantly reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, sexual and gender-based violence and unplanned pregnancies under these conditions.

Follow-up

All stakeholders, present and not present at the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, who have made concrete commitments to ensure the full, effective and accelerated implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development are strongly encouraged to report periodically on the progress towards fulfilling these commitments through transparent means and/or in appropriate public fora.

UN member states are strongly encouraged to use the reporting ecosystem for the ICPD Programme of Action and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, i.e., the UN Commission on Population and Development (CPD), the periodic regional review mechanisms, and the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF), for stock taking on and follow-up to the national commitments announced at the Nairobi Summit. Commitments that are specific to UN entities should be taken up in the context of their respective governing bodies. We recommend that UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund, periodically report on the progress made towards achieving the global commitments outlined above.
ANNEX - PHOTOS

Hon. Goedele Liekens, MP (Belgium)  
Mr. Neil Datta, EPF Secretary

Hon. Christopher Kalila, MP (Zambia)  
Hon. Ruth Labode, MP (Zimbabwe)

Hon. Viplove Thakur, MP (India)  
Hon. Pierette Fofana-Herzberger, MEP (Germany)
Ms. Dorothy Adobea, Sen. Alice-Mary Higgins (Ireland) & Hon. Fourat Ben Chikha, MP (Belgium)

Hon. Souhail Alouini, MP (Tunisia), Hon Touriya Faraj, MP (Morocco) & Hon. Ghita Badroun, MP (Morocco)

Sen. Dieudonne Luma Etienne (Haiti), Hon. Bertrand Sinal, MP (Haiti) & Hon. Sabina Chege, MP Kenya

Sen. Marilou McPhedran (Canada) & Hon. Pam Damoff (Canada)

Hon. Evelyn Regner, MEP (Austria), Hon. Chrysoula Zacharopoulou, MEP (France), Hon. Robert Biedron, MEP (Poland), Hon. Pierette Herzberger-Fofana, MEP (Germany)

Ms. Kjersti Augland, Hon. Silje Hjemdal, MP (Norway), Hon. Heidi Nordby Lunde, Mp (Norway), Mr. Tor Hugne-Olsen
For more photos, please visit our Flickr Album, European Parliamentary Forum.

Thank You

We would like to extend our upmost gratitude to our sponsors, UNFPA and WHO, without whose support and expertise the parliamentary forum at the Nairobi Summit would not have been possible.