June 2019
NEWSLETTER in NUMBERS

52 MPs attend Women Deliver 2019 MP Forum in Vancouver

50.2% of MEPs in new European Parliament pro-choice, EPF intelligence brief finds
Canada increases SRHR investment to $700M/year

In the news

EPF NEWS
Global Parliamentary Alliance on Health, Rights and Development created in Vancouver
VANCOUVER, 6 June 2019 - In the margins of the Women Deliver 2019 Conference, over 50 Members of Parliament participating in the 3-day Parliamentarian's Forum created the first ever global platform for parliamentarians to advocate for better health care, expanding human rights and to meet the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) both in their home countries and abroad: The Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health, Rights and Development (GPA).

Summary

MPs from 56 countries have joined the GPA as founding members
9 MPs have joined the Advisory Group as well as UNFPA, WHO, Women Deliver, IPPF and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation

Next steps

Recruitment of members (including Parliamentary networks, groups and individual MP from the Africa, Asia, the Americas, and the Arab world) as well as Advisory Group members, is ongoing.

The official launch of the GPA will take place at the Nairobi Summit in November. In the meantime, GPA members will engage in study tours to Zambia and the Philippines this summer.

**Women Deliver 2019 MP Forum gathers 52 MPs from 40 countries**
VANCOUVER, 4-6 June 2019 - 52 parliamentarians from 42 countries participated in the Parliamentarians’ Forum at the 5th Women Deliver Conference this week in Vancouver.

Alongside the Women Deliver plenaries and side-events, the three-day Parliamentarians’ Forum included targeted thematic sessions with interventions from key selected leaders delivering for women and girls followed by open discussions.

The Forum aimed to enable a productive and structured dialogue on the successes, challenges and obstacles in advancing women’s and girl’s health and rights and delivering solutions for their advancement on a global scale. The agenda also included a session with the WD2019 Advocacy Academy and on the final day, the creation of the Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health, Rights and Development.

Members of parliaments will play a central role in advancing the SDGs, improving the lives of women and girls in their home countries and abroad. The Parliamentarians’ Forum is thus an excellent opportunity for young and motivated parliamentarians to meet with well-known champion MPs in advancing SRHR at regional, national and global level.

The gathered parliamentarians were addressed by the following speakers throughout the week:

- Ian Askew, Director, Department of Reproductive Health and Research (WHO)
- Dr Alvaro Bermejo, Director General, International Planned Parenthood Federation
- Chris Elias, President of Global Development at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Arthur Erken, Director, UNFPA, Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships
- Françoise Girard, President, International Womens’ Health Coalition
- Sarah E Hendriks, Director, Gender Equality at the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
- Katja Iversen President/CEO, Women Deliver
- Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, UNFPA
- Beth Schlachter, Executive Director, FP2020
- Anupama Tantri, Executive Director, Global Vaccines Policy Development, Merck & Co., Inc.

The Parliamentarians’ Forum was organised by The European Forum of Parliamentarians for Sexual and Reproductive Rights (EPF) and The African Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FPA) in partnership with: United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and World Health Organization (WHO).
LUSAKA, 24-28 June 2019 - A delegation of 10 visiting parliamentarians from Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Finland, Ghana, Lithuania, Portugal, Romania, Turkey and the UK joined their Zambian counterparts for a four-day study tour to Zambia on Universal Health Coverage, Health Financing, Immunization and ICPD.

The first day saw the Lusaka Parliamentarians' Dialogue on ICPD25, universal health coverage (UHC) and immunisation take place at the National Assembly of Zambia. Rt. Hon. Dr. Patrick Matibini, Speaker of the National Assembly of Zambia delivered a keynote address recalling the critical role of parliamentarians to achieve the SDGs by 2030. Following this, Dr. Gifty Addico, Chief, UNFPA Commodity Security Branch delivering a technical presentation on key issues in reproductive health supplies. The Dialogue culminated with the Launch of the Zambia Parliamentarians UHC Communique (see attachment) with Zambian MPs committing to leave no one behind, reiterating that “UHC, particularly primary healthcare is the cornerstone of the health system and a critical step to achieving health for all.”

On the second day, the parliamentary delegation was hosted at the Ministry of Health for a courtesy call with Zambia Minister of Health H.E. Dr. Chitalu Chilufya and his staff to reaffirm Zambia's progress towards improving SRHR outcomes for women and young people UNFPA Zambia. The delgation then visited the Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia Health Facility in Rhodespark, Lusaka before a press briefing at the National Assembly in Lusaka to present the "Zambia Parliamentarians UHC Communiqué". The day ended with
a development partners roundtable on UHC and SRHR in Zambia held at the Swedish Embassy in Zambia under the patronage of H.E Henrik Cederin, Swedish Ambassador to Zambia.

The third day included a visit to Lusaka Matero Level 1 Hospital, George Clinic as well as the Mother and Child Unit of the University Teaching Hospital. Back at the National Assembly of Zambia, the Parliamentary Delegation attended a session during which H.E. Dr. Chitalu Chilufya, Minister of Health, presented the launch and roll-out of the HPV vaccine throughout the country.

For the fourth day, the delegation visited the Marie Stoped and Africa Directions centers in Lusaka to discuss the specific needs of young people and adolescents in Kalikiliki and Mtendere neighbourhoods. Finally, the parliamentarians attended a visit of Medical Stores Limited to learn about the achievements and challenges of storing, dispatching and shipping medical supplies throughout the country.

Upon return from Zambia, participants are expected to carry out follow-up actions within their respective Parliament, political parties and constituencies, emphasising the importance of sexual and reproductive health and rights in sustainable development strategies including for:
- Political and financial commitments made support increased access to UHC and RH commodities.
- Signature of the Ottawa Declaration and dissemination of adopted UHC Communiqué

**EPF attends First Regional Parliamentary Forum for Health and Well-being in the Eastern Mediterranean Region**

TUNIS, 24-26 June 2019 - Hosted by the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean, the first Regional Parliamentary Forum took place in Tunis this
week with a goal to strengthen parliamentarians' engagement in the health sector response to advance health and well-being and the regional strategic public health priorities.

Over 20 parliamentarians from the region created the Regional Parliamentary Forum, which comprises an Advisory Group also present. Speakers over the 3-day meeting included the Tunisian interim Minister of Health H.E. Dr. Sonia Ben Cheikh and WHO Regional Director for the Eastern Mediterranean, Dr. Ahmed Salim Al-Mandhari.

EPF Communications and Outreach Officer, Sarah Bedson, attended the meeting as an observer and delivered a presentation on 'The Role of Parliaments in Positioning Women's Health at the Core of the UHC Agenda'.

**Empowered by EPF FPA delgations, Hon. Sebastian Simon Kapufi, MP, Tanzania makes Parliamentary Statement on women, UHC and PHC**

DODOMA, 21 June 2019 - Following his participation in the EPF FPA parliamentary delegations to the AHAIC conference in Kigali, Ghana Parliamentarians’ Dialogue and Women Deliver 2019 MP Forum in Vancouver, Hon. Sebastian Simon Kapufi, MP from Tanzania, addressed the Speaker and Minister of Finance to discuss Tanzania's need to step up in terms of empowerment of women, universal health coverage (UHC) and primary health care (PHC).

During the budget hearing, Hon. Kapufi stated, "Efforts to prioritise standard gauge railway should go hand in hand to prioritise Universal Health Coverage and in particular Primary Health Care without forgetting the role of empowering women".
He discussed reports and joint statements that were drafted and adopted during the different delegations he participated in and added, "Women drive the economy and their needs and rights must be at the centre of budgeting because they are key stabilisers of the economy".

**Antalya UNFPA Consultation on Ending Unmet Need for Family Planning**

ANTALYA, 17-20 June 2019 - Access to contraceptives & quality family planning knowledge & services is a human right, but so many are being left behind. UNFPA and partners spent the week in Antalya to develop a strategic pathway to end the unmet need for family planning by 2030.

EPF Secretary Neil Datta spoke on a panel to introduce the 2019 Contraception Atlas as well as the "contraception chocolate box" and anti-choice movements, "We need to understand that anti-sexual reproductive rights groups oppose the whole ICPD agenda, including family planning. Avoiding so-called 'controversial issues' is doing their work for them. We need to be more bold and assertive in upholding our principles and advancing our ICPD objectives".

See the Daily Digest briefings [one](#) and [two](#) for more information.
BRUSSELS, 18 June 2019 - Co-organised by EPF, UNFPA and WHO, the high-level auditorium debate "If not now, when? Our health, our rights, our choices!" took place during the European Development Days 2019.

The topic of debate was how to end gender inequalities by realising SRHR for all. Panelists were: Dr. Natalia Kanem, Executive Director, UNFPA // Carin Jämtin, Director General, SIDA, Sweden // H.E. Jeanne d'Arc Gakuba, Vice-President of the Senate of Rwanda // Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, Director General, World Health Organisation // H.E. Alexander De Croo, Deputy Prime Minister, Belgium // Aaron Atimpe, EDD Young Leader, Ghana

During her intervention, Senator Jeanne d'Arc Gakuba, Vice-President of the Senate of Rwanda reflected on the need for political leaders to reach out to constituents to raise awareness, exchange on the unfinished business of SRHR and leave no one behind. H.E. insisted on the importance of the SDGs on health and gender equality to achieve universal health coverage and SRHR for all. "The next steps to finish the unfinished business of ICPD are to invest in youth and adolescents, improve health and eliminate gender-based violence."
VANCOUVER, 4 June 2019 - Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau announced at the 2019 Women Deliver conference that Canada will increase its investment in global sexual and reproductive health and rights to $700 million a year by 2023, as part of a new commitment that will see global health spending increase to $1.4 billion and maintained through 2030.

With its ten-year commitment, Canada is aligning its support with the 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, which also include a heavy focus on gender equality. The full $1.4 billion investment will use a holistic approach to health, integrating sexual and reproductive health and rights with broader sector work on maternal, newborn and child health, nutrition, education, water, sanitation and hygiene, and research and innovation.

By placing human rights at the centre of its development commitment, Canada has positioned itself as a global leader in upholding and defending the rights of women and girls.

EPF congratulates its partner Action Canada, who has been at the forefront of calling on the Government of Canada to make this investment possible.
BRUSSELS, 27 June 2019 – An initial analysis of the 2019 European Parliament election results finds that the proportion of pro-choice MEPs may have risen from 47.73% to 50.20% while the number of anti-choice MEPs appears to have decreased. The Intelligence Brief also highlights returning and prospective new SRHR champions and was disseminated to all APPG secretariats this month.

Especially noteworthy is the section on sexual and reproductive health and rights:
16.6.1. mainstream mandatory, comprehensive and inclusive sexual and relationship education, conveying unbiased, age-appropriate information on sexuality, relationships and reproductive rights;
16.6.2. guarantee access to affordable and modern methods of contraception, with a level of reimbursement equal to other services provided by national health systems, and adequate, comprehensible information made available to the general public.

Read the Resolution here

Council of Europe SRHR briefing sees more MPs join as GPA founding members
STRASBOURG, 27 June 2019 - During the third 2019 session of the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (PACE), EPF held a lunch briefing to give an update on recent SRHR developments. The briefing was attended by 5 Members of Parliament from Andorra, Austria, Hungary and Sweden.

Parliamentarians were also invited to join the Global Parliamentary Alliance for Health Rights and Development.