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**General debate on national experience in population matters:
realizing the future we want — integrating population issues
into sustainable development, including in the post-2015
development agenda**

Statement submitted by Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council*

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* The present statement is issued without formal editing.



Statement

We Asian-Pacific Parliamentarians from the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development make this official AFPPD statement for the forty-eighth session of the Commission on Population and Development (CPD).

AFPPD welcomes the theme of the forty-eighth session: “Realizing the future we want: integrating population issues into sustainable development, including the post-2015 development agenda.”

AFPPD’s network of national parliamentary committees and individual champion Members of Parliament recognize the importance of ensuring the Programme of Action (PoA) of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) is integrated into the future Sustainable Development Goals, especially into individual national SDGs plans.

Since the adoption of the ICPD PoA in 1994, the Asia-Pacific region has witnessed considerable progress in terms of increasing the availability of sexual and reproductive health services, including family planning, improving maternal health and promoting gender equality. There has been a 50 per cent fall in maternal mortality over the past 20 years and a decrease in HIV infection rates, though HIV prevalence is still increasing, partly due to an expansion of treatment that has increased the survival of persons living with HIV and AIDS.

Despite these advances, challenges remain and new challenges arise. Access to integrated, quality sexual and reproductive health services remains uneven, with women, adolescents, and youth, those of lower socioeconomic status and those living in rural and remote areas being at a considerable disadvantage. Barriers to accessing sexual and reproductive health information and services, including contraception result in unintended pregnancies, avoidable maternal and child mortality and morbidity, and HIV and other sexually transmitted infections.

We acknowledge and commit to address in our respective parliaments the persistence and pervasiveness of gender-based violence including laws, regulations, policies and practices that discriminate against women and girls; the damage caused by natural disasters and environmental degradation, which impact those without SRHR support most severely; the rapid demographic shift, particularly ageing in Asia, will require comprehensive social and economic adaptation; and the significant number of migrants, as well as inadequate social protection for most migrants. In addition, there are persistent inequalities in income and opportunity, often associated with such demographic features as age, gender, ethnicity, and race. We acknowledge that without intensive support and advocacy, some member nations in our region will show no major improvement on many of the ICPD PoA areas in the near future.

These challenges have a tangible impact on people’s lives, as well as social and economic development in the broader context. They need to be effectively addressed in the post-2015 development agenda if we are to ensure the sustainability of development. Moving forward requires greater attention to sustainability, gender equality and inclusion by ensuring that the concerns of all groups are addressed.

We, as parliamentarians, recognise the important function that we perform in passing appropriate legislation, reviewing existing legislation and mobilising strong support for laws consistent with the ICPD, which results in sustainable, equitable

outcomes for health, society and the economy. And we are committed to promoting a rights-based approach and good governance in advancing the ICPD agenda.

As Asian-Pacific parliamentarians committed to removing inequalities and advancing the well-being of all peoples in our region, we urge Member States to endorse and act on the Ministerial Declaration from the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference.

To protect the rights and promote wellbeing of all people, we urge Member States and the international community to reaffirm your commitments to the ICPD PoA and key actions for its further implementation and to consider the framework of actions for the follow-up to the ICPD PoA specifically on its core issues of sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, youth, ageing, migration, urbanisation and sustainable development.

We urge Member States to address rising inequality.
