**Enhancing the Role of Parliamentarians**

**in the Interlinkage between Population Issues**

**and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development - Part II**

Policy Proposal adopted

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Introduction: We value highly the series of projects supported by the Japan Trust Fund to date. Based on the outcomes of those projects, we welcome the broad-ranging inclusion of outcomes from the Global Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (GCPPD) held in April into the G7 Ise-Shima Summit Leaders’ Declaration, and in particular we issue a strong demand for the inclusion into TICAD VI of the recommendations from the Japan-African Parliamentarians’ Dialogue held in Tokyo in February this year. Building on these outcomes, with the aim of achieving the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* in our capacity as parliamentarians in realizing sustainable development, and ahead of TICAD VI which will be held shortly, we confirm the role of parliamentarians as follows and make the following recommendations.

**1 Preamble**

1.1 Undertaking population programs will be critical for realizing the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and in order for this to happen, it will also be critical to implement in full the International Conference on Population and Development Programme of Action (ICPD PoA), which serves as the platform for the SDGs. Equally, the full implementation of the recently endorsed African Health Strategies which include the revised Maputo Plan of Action, is central to attaining the SDGs (in Africa).

1.2 Health is a fundamental factor in achieving sustainable development, and to that end achieving Universal Health Coverage (UHC) will be an important factor. Promoting universal access to reproductive health (RH) and services will be critical if UHC is to be achieved, and at the same time achieving UHC will also have an important role in realizing solutions to population issues. In that sense we confirm that achieving UHC and undertaking population programmes is a complementary undertaking.

1.3 In order to achieve sustainable development that ‘leaves no one behind’, all members of society, including its most vulnerable members, need to be able to benefit from population programmes and UHC that provides basic health services for various health issues to live lives with dignity; and to realize their full potential.

1.4 A demographic dividend can be gained from the demographic transition that results from the effect of population programmes. The good health of a country’s population will be a precondition for harnessing that dividend for that country’s economic development. As well as expanding a UHC system centered on primary health care, it will also be important to invest in young people on the basis of gender equality, in the form of education opportunities and employment creation.

**2 Prioritizing population programmes**

2.1 From this perspective, in order to achieve sustainable development the highest priority should be given to population programmes in a way that achieves universal access to RH services. These services include family planning services and services that ensure the health of women and girls, who tend to be relegated to a vulnerable position within societies. These population programmes are to be given a high priority in the national development plans of respective countries, and the budgetary resources are to be allocated to enable those programmes to be implemented.

**3 Public health**

3.1 As globalization advances and the world becomes increasingly interdependent, new and recurring infectious diseases are no longer a problem restricted to just one country – they have become a global issue. The lessons learned from the 2014 Ebola outbreak were that a health emergency placed even further strain on the challenged public health systems of many countries; and that as a result of the consequent broad decline in the ability of those countries’ economic and administrative systems to function properly, there was a near collapse health system especially in their delivery of RH services, which hold the key to good health for those countries’ most vulnerable groups such as pregnant women and girls. This only amplified the negative impact of the outbreak.

3.2 We underscore that health systems should be strengthened, including through the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR) towards UHC that also contribute to better preparedness against public health emergencies. It also highlighted the importance of coordinated campaigns rooted within local communities undertaken by civil society organizations (CSOs) that aim to bring about fundamental change in people’s behavior, which lies at the heart of efforts to prevent infectious diseases.

3.3 Working in partnership with CSOs active within local communities, health units are to be established to provide primary health care (including RH services), which can also function as a system of prevention against infectious diseases. These units can also serve as bases for collecting the accurate data that will be needed to implement the International Health Regulations (IHR), and also as first response bases to contain the spread of outbreaks of diseases.

**4 Global partnerships**

4.1 Global partnerships will be critical for achieving the SDGs. Our activities to date have made it evident that common standards will be needed for realizing these global partnerships, and that the most important element to secure for these standards is to ensure accountability and transparency to the citizens in each country.

4.2 We are proud that our activities have led to the enactment of legislation by Uganda and Zambia that mandates the tabling of reports on ODA projects in their national parliaments. We are calling on countries in Africa, Asia, Arab and Europe that have not yet legislated that requirement to take that step so that it can serve as one basis for global partnership.

4.3 For the parliamentarians of donor countries, such a legislative mechanism would ensure accountability, achieving targeted objectives and transparency for the taxpayers of their countries. The presence of such a requirement would help donor countries focus their attention when weighing up where to direct their aid.

**5 Food security**

5.1 According to estimates of the United Nations, while populations in most regions of the world will start to decline from 2070, Africa’s population alone is expected to increase. This shows the urgent importance of implementing population programmes, and ensuring food security has also become an urgent issue. Simultaneously, economic growth and growing number of young population in Asia and the Arab Region increase food demand. It makes pressure for supply and demand balance for food and it will be able to create food insecurity in future.

5.2 In order to address these issues, together with population programmes, it will be important to raise the agricultural productivity of small-scale farmers, establish food value chains in food production, distribution and storage through agricultural extension outreach paying close attention to women’s empowerment, and put small-scale farmers on a more organized footing. And to promote food processing industry that can absorb excessive production and to contribute Food Value Chain.

5.3 Alongside working to spread modern agricultural practices with their higher levels of productivity, it will be necessary to understand the environmental restriction and the value of indigenous crops varieties and re-evaluate scientifically the function that traditional agricultural products have fulfilled in providing food security.