

Global Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development Toward the 2016 G7 Ise-Shima Summit

Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD)
Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP)

Declaration and Recommendations

27 April 2016



Introduction

We, over 130 members of parliaments from 65 countries - around the world, attending the *Global Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development Toward the 2016 G7 Ise-Shima Summit* in Japan, on April 26th-27th, call on the G7 to reaffirm its commitment to human security to achieve freedom from fear and freedom from want, and sustainable development to ensure that all human beings can fulfill their potential in dignity and equality and in a healthy environment.

We congratulate the Government of Japan for convening the first G7 Summit after the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 193 Member States of the United Nations, and taking a proactive leadership role in carrying forward the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*. The SDGs issued from the 2030 Agenda provide hope, vision and assurance for the future of our planet, and will act as a platform for the world to achieve sustainable growth and development.

We, on behalf of our citizens, present our recommendations for world leaders to deliver on this agenda at the G7 Ise-Shima Summit where the leaders of the world's seven largest economies can proactively drive the direction of international cooperation and economic management in a way that delivers benefits for all people.

Preamble

Recalling global parliamentarians' work on population and development, beginning with the 1969 International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (ICPPD) in Colombo, Sri Lanka;

Affirming the findings and declarations of the International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (ICPPD 1994), convened ahead of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, placing population issues squarely within the context of sustainable development, which was reflected in the Preamble and Principles of the ICPD's Programme of Action (ICPD PoA),

Reaffirming the findings and recommendations of the 20th Anniversary of the ICPD in 2014, including those from the global thematic meetings on youth, human rights and women's and girl's health, as well as the outcomes of the regional reviews, constituting regional plans of action;

Reinforcing the concept promoted by Prime Minister Abe's administration, popularly known as "a society where women shine," to intensify all countries' efforts to take action to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls and to provide women and girls with opportunities to lead meaningful and dignified lives;

Reaffirming the Fourth World Conference on Women and the Beijing Platform for Action, UN Security Council Resolution 1325 and subsequent resolutions on women, peace, and security, and the Declaration adopted at the G7 Parliamentarians Conference held in Berlin in 2015, which underlined the importance of strengthening universal access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) around the world, while realizing that gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment is fundamental to achieving the SDGs;

Emphasizing the principle of the 2030 Agenda, agreed to by every nation, affirming the commitment to take bold and transformative action in order to shift the world toward a sustainable and resilient path;

Recalling that 'leaving no one behind' is a key principle of the SDGs, and that universal health coverage (UHC), which is complementary to and reinforcing of population issues, is critical to achieving the SDGs;

Recognizing that poverty, social injustice and environmental degradation are often the driving causes of violence and insecurity, including international and domestic conflicts and terrorism, and that tackling the root causes of these challenges is necessary to secure peace and prosperity for all;

Acknowledging the grave impacts of global climate change, particularly on geographically vulnerable countries, including the Small Island Nations, which is a threat to health and human security everywhere;

Recognizing that currently more than 100 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, an estimated 26 million of whom are women and girls of reproductive age, highly vulnerable to rape, sexual exploitation, and human trafficking;

Emphasizing that we parliamentarians and policy makers must pay careful consideration to the needs and rights of all people – including women, youth, the elderly, ethnic and religious minorities, persons with disabilities, and groups with diverse sexual orientation and gender identity;

We make the following declaration and recommendations,

Declaration and Recommendations for the G7 Summit

1. Gender Equality, Women's and Girl's Empowerment, and Universal Health Coverage (UHC)

We firmly recognize the imperative of gender equality and empowering women and girls, who represent half of the world's population and have a critical role to play in every aspect and area of society in achieving sustainable development, but express our frustration at the slow and inequitable progress. Ensuring comprehensive sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services and sexual and reproductive health rights (SRHR) is also critical to empowering women and girls, who have a right to control their healthcare and fertility in achieving their schooling, careers, health needs and personal ambitions. In guaranteeing equal access to critical health services and information for women and girls, and also to other marginalized communities and individuals, Universal Health Coverage is the best investment a government can make in the health and well-being of its population, in

reducing the burden of untreated illnesses and the transmission of these illnesses, and in the prosperity and dignity of all.

We, parliamentarians, commit to and call on the G7 to:

- 1.1 Invest in Universal Health Coverage to support equity and rights by focusing on the most marginalized and vulnerable populations, including women and girls, delivering comprehensive sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent primary health care services, and by ensuring services are provided regardless of ability to pay;
- 1.2 Enable every woman and girl to have access to full reproductive health services, including in humanitarian settings, and especially in conflict and post-conflict situations, and make informed, independent choices regarding her sexual and reproductive health and rights as a vital and necessary basis for building sustainable societies. As gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment are recognized in the SDGs as fundamental to realizing human rights and key dimensions of poverty eradication and of population development, the strengthening of access to SRHR is essential for women's and girl's empowerment and the realization of all other goals;
- 1.3 Advance the empowerment of women and girls, and protect and promote their human rights, including their right to education, health, safety and security, thereby achieving gender equality, including through eradication of pregnancy-related death, gender-based violence in the private and public spheres and in humanitarian crises, and harmful practices such as early and forced marriage and FGM as essential for women's and girl's empowerment;
- 1.4 Reaffirm the continued efforts in this direction as well as towards those issues related to the sharing of unpaid work, access to equal pay, economic and productive resources, land and social protection for women and girls, which also address the feminization of poverty in ageing societies. Appropriate assistance, policies and programmes, including international development cooperation should be provided in this regard;
- 1.5 Strengthen national and international legal frameworks and policies in order to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women and girls, and further develop and support fair and functional implementing and monitoring bodies. Remove legal barriers preventing women and adolescent girls from access to safe abortion, including revising restrictions within existing abortion laws, and where legal, ensure the availability of safe, good-quality abortion services;
- 1.6 Support active political and economic participation by women and girls to ensure the development of societies that guarantee liberty and individual choice for women and girls. Given that the percentage of women in parliament has nearly doubled in the last 20 years, yet this translates into only 22% of women in parliament today, more systematic national, regional and global actions are imperative to involve women in decision-making processes at all levels, thereby enhancing gender equality and women's and girl's empowerment and effective participation and leadership.

2. Investing in Youth

With today's generation of young people being the largest in history, numbering 1.8 billion, young people should be at the center of population issues, representing society's hopes for the future. Investing in young people is therefore of critical importance to making future societies economically dynamic, and for building peaceful, inclusive and sustainable societies. In fact, the cost of not investing in education, skills development, health, and empowerment is one of the highest costs we can incur.

We, parliamentarians, commit to and call on the G7 to:

2.1 Adopt the “4E” framework of action-oriented policies for young people: ensure access to quality health information and services, provide quality education, create employment, and strive for equality/equity for all, thereby ensuring peace, security and stability of society and enhancing the realization of a demographic dividend;

2.2 Provide comprehensive sexuality education and establish a UHC system that focuses on universal access to full sexual and reproductive health services including family planning and information for young people, addressing the negative social consequences of gender stereotypes;

2.3 Commit to eradicating harmful practices such as early, child and forced marriage, and female genital mutilation, and provide girls at risk of these practices with the information they need to advocate for their rights;

2.4 The demographic dividend requires planning: provide youth with access to quality education, skills, and training and create decent work and employment opportunities in developing and developed countries in order to make full use of the capabilities and resources of the young population once they attain working age;

2.5 Invest in and promote civil, economic, political and social participation of youth, including the most vulnerable and marginalized young populations such as young forced migrants and refugees, while ensuring equity in educational, vocational and professional development programs for all young people in order to realize their full potential and to combat vulnerability and radicalization.

3. Building Active and Economically Vibrant Ageing Societies

The world is ageing rapidly. By 2050, people aged 60 and older will make up 22 per cent of the total population. Ageing is a natural part of the human life cycle and should be celebrated. Increased life expectancies remain and will be a challenge for both developed and developing countries, so effective measures should be created as a social foundation for good health, ageing with dignity, maintenance of functional capacity, and longevity. Elderly women, who tend to be the poorest and most vulnerable to mental and physical illnesses require special investment and support.

We, parliamentarians, commit to and call on the G7 to:

3.1 Support the development and maintenance of a sustainable UHC system that offers equitable and affordable health and social insurance, along with comprehensive health and social services, to extend healthy life expectancy and mitigate the impact of non-communicable diseases. Take necessary measures to provide essential nutrition and address mental health needs. Every elderly person, in particular women, should be able to lead a meaningful and dignified life while enjoying family, community, and social participation;

3.2 Recognize and take into account the elderly’s varied and changing abilities and physical capacities when promoting their social participation. Prioritize support for their economic independence, promote social and technological innovation that serves their needs, and

develop various alternatives for long-term care;

3.3 Support the review and updating of relevant social, economic, and health policies and legislation, including the introduction of UHC and the implementation of preventive care policies in order to maximize the functional capacities and autonomy of older people, before the cost of implementing these policies becomes prohibitive;

4. Infectious Disease Risk Management as a Part of Human Security

The world is becoming increasingly interdependent, further increasing global risks of new and acute communicable diseases, such as SARS, Zika and Ebola, and the emergence of drug-resistant organisms. However, this interdependence also enhances opportunities for cross-border cooperation and health system strengthening and implementation of lessons learned from the continuing global fight against diseases such as tuberculosis, HIV, and Malaria.

We, parliamentarians, commit to and call on the G7 to:

4.1 Support the development of UHC as a fundamental basis to ensure preparedness and prevention of infectious diseases at all times, whether during emergencies or non-emergency times, underlining the importance of protecting the health of most vulnerable and marginalized members such as women and children as their basic, fundamental human rights;

4.2 Strengthen solidarity among parliamentarians and governments to play a catalytic role in building a health governance system with a special focus on infectious disease risk management and prevention, by ensuring that stakeholders at the community, local, national, regional and global levels all play their respective roles and responsibilities seamlessly to mitigate the negative impacts of potential public health crises by:

- establishing and strengthening health systems, including the cost of medication and other infrastructure, to withstand infectious disease epidemics, and implement gender-sensitive coping measures at the community, local and national levels in our respective countries to ensure that women and girls are not disproportionately affected;
- complying with the International Health Regulations (IHR) of the World Health Organization (WHO) at our respective national levels, along with strengthening the core capacity of the WHO to implement the IHR;
- strengthening research and development (R&D), sharing knowledge and information, including measures to address anti-microbial resistance (AMR) with affordable and accessible new drugs, diagnostics and vaccines;
- ensuring that a well-coordinated international cooperation architecture is in place, including the Contingency Fund for Emergency (CEF) at the WHO and the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF) at the World Bank deliver immediate and effective responses, in order to support affected countries;
- protecting public health and medical personnel, especially frontline healthcare providers, from contracting infectious diseases and instituting insurance schemes where possible.

4.3 Improve global health governance and exercise collective leadership to prevent and contain the impacts of future infectious diseases which exceed national mitigation capacity by:

- emphasizing human resource development in the public health sector, with international assistance;
- where a large scale pandemic cannot be brought under control by the WHO alone, ensure that, under the UN Secretary General’s leadership, the WHO is equipped with the institutional capacity to take an effective overall coordination role among UN and bilateral agencies and CSOs, in collaboration with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA);
- ensuring and implementing policies related to research and development (R&D) for infectious diseases, vaccine dissemination, and the development of other medical products and tools for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and similar infectious diseases;
- securing access to basic health services including universal access to sexual and reproductive health in both emergency and ordinary times. For this purpose, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) should take a lead role in ensuring universal access to SRH and the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) for sexual and reproductive health in order to build resilience and readiness for safeguarding maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health services including in times of emergency and conflict.

The Role of Parliamentarians in the Era of the SDGs

Parliamentarians are directly involved in public policy planning, design and implementation as the representatives of their people, and are responsible for mobilizing the political will to achieve important policy goals. As a result of prior efforts, the established parliamentary networks have continuously proposed recommendations on the worldwide agenda, particularly global health issues that inevitably affect their constituencies, countries and ultimately the world. The importance of parliamentarians was highlighted in the 2030 Agenda, which underlines “the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments.” (2030 Agenda, para. 45).

We, parliamentarians, commit to:

1. Address population issues such as gender equality and women’s and girl’s empowerment, investing in youth and active ageing, and secure appropriate budgetary allocations toward the realization of UHC as a cross-cutting policy approach at the national level, including universal access to sexual and reproductive health;
2. Increase development assistance budgets for population and development while ensuring the target of 0.7 per cent of GNI for official development assistance, as agreed at the previous International Parliamentarians Conferences on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, and earmark at least 10 percent of those funds for realizing sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender equality, women’s and girls’ human rights and their empowerment;

3. Establish oversight mechanisms, including the use of sex and age disaggregated data, to facilitate good risk management and governance systems at the community, local, national, regional and global levels, by serving as catalysts in linking all levels in responding to any emergency situations, including public health crises;
4. Implement evidence-based policies reflecting the diversity of demographics and marginalized groups that exist in different countries, ‘leaving no one behind’, and integrate such differences in order to achieve the SDGs, taking into consideration economic, social, environmental and institutional dimensions;
5. Ensure accountability and transparency in all institutions and actively promote good governance, with the full participation of civil society, the private sector, and the media, in order to build a common action framework designed to achieve global partnerships to address human security and sustainable development;
6. Urge our governments to fulfill commitments taken at the international level and commit our own resources toward the achievement of the SDGs at the national level.

The above-mentioned recommendations to the 2016 G7 Ise-Shima Summit and subsequent intergovernmental fora will be brought to respective national parliaments for implementation by our governments.