

Implementing the ICPD Agenda: Action Plan for Parliamentarians

We, the 45 parliamentary participants of the PGA/ Parliament of Ghana Workshop on "Implementing the ICPD Agenda," gathered at the National Theater Conference Hall on December 4-5, 1997, in Accra, Ghana, drawn from eight different countries in Africa, Europe and the Americas,

Recognize that the last six years have seen a series of landmark United Nations Conferences that have set the agenda for policies affecting the lives of women, children and men,

That at these conferences, namely: Environment and Development in Rio (1992), Human Rights in Vienna (1993), Population and Development in Cairo (1994), World Summit on Social Development in Copenhagen (1995), Fourth World Conference on Women in Beijing (1995), Habitat II in Istanbul (1996), governments agreed on interrelated Plans of Action by consensus.

That the process of these conferences has raised national and international awareness of the issues, generated debate about policies and created an arena for the emergence of a global consensus on an international development strategy that encompasses the needs of the earth and its inhabitants.

Are Concerned that implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action has been sluggish and weak as a result of a lack of political will to develop the appropriate strategies and mechanisms and to allocate the necessary resources,

Firmly believe that parliamentarians, as the representatives of the people, play a critical role in the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, as adopted at Cairo, at the national and sub-national level,

Understand that planning and achieving true sustainable development requires the active participation of all sectors of society,

Commit to allocating the human and financial resources to help meet the needs of all those who cannot pay the full cost of reproductive health and family planning services,

And sharing information and experience in a spirit of international cooperation and support.

Strategy for Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action

We Parliamentarians will:

- Evaluate current governmental policies for their impact on reproductive health and the status of women. Develop strategies to enhance or eliminate their effect.
- Promote legislation to further the advancement of reproductive health and the status of women. Work to repeal legislation obstructive to reproductive health and the status of women.
- Educate the public on the laws and their implications for the welfare of the people.
- Organize and advocate for the financial support of particular activities and the field in general.

- Use statistics and information to convince the government to allocate the necessary resources and take action.
- Connect with governmental and non-governmental groups to work on raising public awareness about reproductive health and consumption patterns and generating resources, financial and otherwise.
- Establish networks with and work to strengthen international and domestic groups devoted to population and reproductive health issues.
- Monitor governmental action on such international recommendations as those developed at the UN conferences on the environment (Rio), status of women (Beijing) and population (Cairo).
- Affirm our will to work with all sister organizations in the region and sub-region on Population and Development issues and particularly the Arab-Africa Forum on Population and Development.

Recommendations for Building Parliamentary Capacity

- Maintain a high level of knowledge regarding the realities of the population and reproductive health issues of the country, particularly that of the constituencies and areas they represent; as well as a high level of knowledge of the major population and reproductive health issues of concern to the international community and the relevant recommendations.
- Remain current on national policies and programs, as well as the major agencies and organizations involved in the programs.
- Ensure parliamentary caucuses on population and development are multi-party in order to maintain stability in times of political change.
- Seek internal and external support for parliamentary caucuses on population and development in order to ensure the independence of the group.
- Commission analytical studies and collect information to maintain updated documentation and data on population-related issues in the parliamentary library.
- Visit other countries to study their policies and programs in the area of population and development.
- Work through *Parliamentarians for Global Action* to establish and strengthen parliamentary coordination and consensus on population and development.