



The Japan Parliamentarians Federation for Population

NEWS LETTER

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(1) JPPF Joint Committee Meeting

(2) Regional Parliamentarians' Meeting on the Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls in Lao PDR

(3) Ms. Tomoko Fukuda becomes the first IPPF Regional Director from Japan

(1) JPPF Joint Committee Meeting with Mr. Arthur Erken from UNFPA Headquarters

On 25 June, JPPF organized the Joint Committee Meeting to coincide with the visit to Japan by Mr. Arthur Erken, Director of the Division of Communications and Strategic Partnerships at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and Mr. Klaus Simoni Pedersen, Chief of the Resource Mobilization Branch also at the UNFPA.



First, Hon. Ichiro Aisawa, Acting Chair of JPPF, delivered the opening address to welcome the guests. Touching on the UN report estimating that the world population will exceed 10 billion by 2100, Hon. Aisawa said, "It depends on our efforts whether the population increase becomes an opportunity or a risk". Mr. Erken then gave a lecture titled, "Unfinished Business: the 25th Anniversary of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)—From Cairo to Nairobi", in which he expressed appreciation for the support given to UNFPA by the Japanese government and citizens. He also briefed the participants on the Nairobi Summit due to be held in November to commemorate ICPD+25, and called upon JPPF members to attend.

The Nairobi Summit will review unfinished tasks in the 25 years since the ICPD as well as discuss future work for achieving the 2030 Agenda. It will consider polarization between the world's population increase, on one hand, and declining fertility and ageing, as in the case of Japan, on the other; the fact that 200 million women still lack access to family planning services and more than 800 women are dying from pregnancy and childbirth every day; and the fact that 33,000 girls are being forced into marriage every day and women and girls are being subject to these and other forms of violence. Mr. Erken expressed hope for Japan's contribution to the important task of addressing these issues.

During the question and answer session, Hon. Asahiko Mihara, Director of JPPF, shared his experience in Niger about 20 years ago, and suggested that poverty eradication would require addressing both the issues of population and food security. Mr. Erken strongly agreed and said that fertility rate in Niger remains high at 7.0 and that various organizations need to cooperate in addressing the issues of food, health, education, and employment that arise from population increase in Africa, where it is expected that population will double in the next 30 years from the current level of 1 billion people.



Hon. Mihara also pointed out that whereas in countries like Rwanda women make up about 60% of all parliamentarians and a half of cabinet ministers, only 8% of parliamentarians in Japan are women. Mr. Erken replied that the Japanese government could take note of the fact that extremely low fertility is closely related to gender gap in Japan. To explain, Mr. Pedersen added that in his home country Denmark, there are equal numbers of men and women in parliament and in employment and that 75% of all women have employment, which is made possible by availability of free nurseries and a system of one-year paternity and maternity leave. Additionally, Mr. Pedersen noted that Japan's contributions in the last year alone made it possible to support 400,000 women and children and conveyed sincere appreciation to Japan, which has remained as a top 10 donor almost throughout the period after the establishment of UNFPA in 1969. He also expressed hopes for Japan's contribution towards UHC and other issues.

Hon. Hideki Makihara, who is also a member of Japan-AU Parliamentary Friendship Association, said he would appreciate it if he can be provided with data on African countries ahead of planned discussions between members of the Friendship Association and representatives from African countries at TICAD7.

Hon. Ryuhei Kawada, Director of JPPF, spoke of a lawmaker-initiated legislation that was enacted in the Japanese Diet to compensate disabled people who were forcibly sterilized in the past under a eugenics law, and explained that people in Japan are gradually having a better understanding of the concept of reproductive health and rights (RH/R). He said that efforts are being made in Japan to increase the number of women parliamentarians and parliamentary candidates to promote gender equality towards attainment of the SDGs. As a person infected with HIV, he focuses on the relationship between immunity and nutrition and would like to work on these issues in Japan and abroad, including at the Global Nutrition Summit, which will be held in Japan next year.

Lastly, Hon. Teruhiko Mashiko, Vice-Chair of JPPF, expressed appreciation to Ms. Mariko Sato for her efforts as Director of UNFPA Tokyo Office, and closed the meeting by saying that he hoped to meet expectations that people have on Japan, in terms of its knowledge and technology, by working towards making Japan as a model for other countries in addressing issues related to extremely low fertility and ageing society.



(2) Regional Parliamentarians' Meeting on the Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls in Lao PDR

On 4 July, the Asian Population and Development Association (APDA), which serves as the secretariat of JPPF, organized the *Regional Parliamentarians' Meeting on the Prevention of Violence against Women and Girls* in Vientiane, Lao PDR. The meeting was co-hosted by the National Assembly of Lao PDR and supported by UNFPA Asia and the Pacific Regional Office (APRO). A total of 70 persons attended, including parliamentarians, experts and NGOs from 13 countries as well as representatives of UN organizations and the Lao government to share best practices in legislation, policies, and programmes for preventing violence against women and girls. At the end of the meeting, the participants discussed and adopted an outcome document that summarized the key parliamentary action plan.



On the following day on 5 July, the participants visited the Lao Women's Union (LWU)'s Counseling and Protection Center for Women and Children, the legal aid clinic of the Association for Development of Women and Legal Education (ADWLE), the Promotion of Family Health Association (PFHA), which is a Member Association of IPPF, and the Lao Youth Union (LYU) office. They were briefed on the actual counseling services, legal support, vocational training, and volunteers' work, and had lively exchange of opinions. Each organization expressed appreciation to the Japanese government and the Japanese embassy in Laos for their assistance.



(3) Ms. Tomoko Fukuda becomes the first IPPF Regional Director from Japan

(Excerpt from <https://www.ippfeseaor.org/news/ippf-eseaor-welcomes-tomoko-fukuda-its-new-regional-director>)

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The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) works towards a world where women, men, and young people everywhere are free to make choices about their sexuality and well-being without discrimination – free to decide when to have children, free to pursue healthy sexual lives, and to live without the fear of having unwanted pregnancies and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. A world where gender or sexuality are no longer a source of inequality or stigma. IPPF is a global service provider and a leading advocate of SRHR for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals in more than 150 countries.



Ms. Fukuda, as the first IPPF Regional Director from Japan, leads activities of the IPPF East, South East Asia and Oceania Region (IPPF ESEAOR) based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. IPPF ESEAOR is supporting 22 Member Associations and three (3) Collaborating Partners in a total of twenty-five countries.

Ms. Fukuda was the Advocacy Manager of the Japanese Organization for International Cooperation in Family Planning (JOICFP) up until May 2019. During her role as Advocacy Manager since 2015, she was a part of advocacy efforts on global health and gender equality, as well as global advocacy surrounding the G20/G7 and TICAD. She also served as General Secretary of the Gender Working Group, the Japan CSO Network on the SDGS.

Ms. Fukuda said, “In a rapidly changing society, the role sought by Member Associations is changing. We want to support each Member Association to provide appropriate, timely and affordable information and services and contribute to the achievement of UHC. As IPPF, we will vigorously raise the voice for the realization of sexual reproductive rights for all people”.



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