

Progress Made by Parliamentarians in Implementing the Programme of Action  
of the International Conference on Population and Development

REPORT



2006 Global Survey

# Cairo to 2015 The Road to Success

IPCI  
iCPD

**PHOTO**

Steve McCurry/Magnum Photos

**NOTES**

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# **Cairo to 2015**

# **The Road to Success**

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# FOREWORD

For over 30 years, parliamentarians have been actively promoting the issues of population and development. Since the first national parliamentary group on population was established in Japan in 1974, legislators in many countries have organized themselves to create national parliamentary groups on population-related issues. By 2000, almost 100 countries had a national group or committee devoted to these issues. These entities work closely with UNFPA and the regional umbrella networks of parliamentarians: the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), the Inter-American Parliamentary Group on Population and Development (IAPG), the African and Arab Parliamentarians on Population and Development (FAAPPD) and the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF). No other area of development can boast such a long-standing, well-organized and dynamic global movement of legislators.

Parliamentarians have come a long way in tackling population issues. Since the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo in 1994, they have passed laws and policies and approved budgets to implement the ICPD Programme of Action. Within and beyond the walls of parliament, they have spoken up on the importance of population, reproductive health and rights and gender equality among fellow legislators, government officials, civil society and the media. At the international level, they have participated in inter-governmental meetings and influenced their outcomes in favour of the Cairo agenda.

This report is a first-ever attempt to chronicle the activities of parliamentarians worldwide to advance ICPD issues. It summarizes the results of a Global Survey that UNFPA and the four regional parliamentary groups jointly

conducted in 2006, in collaboration with the Harvard School of Public Health. The 322 legislators from 104 countries and institutions who participated in the Survey were chosen for their strong commitment to population and development. The report documents the enormous progress parliamentarians have made since 1994, as well as their priorities, aspirations and challenges. It is a tribute to the remarkable work they have done, individually as well as collectively, to create an enabling environment and to mobilize resources for advancing the ICPD agenda.

The Survey showed that respondents were personally involved in the adoption of 250 laws and 67 policies and the introduction of 157 bills on population-related issues. A number of parliamentarians, mainly in donor countries, were successful in increasing budget allocations for ICPD implementation. Along with these outstanding

achievements, the Survey painted a compelling picture of the challenges legislators faced in fulfilling their role as advocates of population, reproductive health and rights and gender equality. For example, lack of information and awareness about ICPD issues, often compounded by active opposition mounted against some aspects of the Cairo mandate, has made it difficult for parliamentarians to effect necessary change in laws and policies. Even when appropriate laws and policies were in place, lack of implementation and lack of resources has continued to hamper progress.

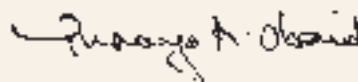
The report makes several recommendations to address these obstacles. It calls on UNFPA and the regional parliamentary groups to:

- Encourage interaction with other parliamentarians at national and regional levels, including through creating or revitalizing national population groups and through active involvement in regional group activities;
- Link the ICPD agenda to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and better monitor country progress;
- Meet parliamentarians' overwhelming need for information;
- Provide strategies to tackle opposition against the ICPD agenda;
- Meet the need of developing-country parliamentarians' for more training and that of donor-country parliamentarians' for meetings and study tours;
- Assist in the enactment of HIV/AIDS laws;
- Address regional disparities in enacting ICPD-related laws;
- Encourage increased budget allocations for ICPD;
- Increase gender awareness and gender balance among parliamentarians;

- Strengthen the implementation of laws and policies; and
- Increase financial and material support for parliamentarians' activities.

It is our sincere hope that the findings of this Global Survey will help parliamentarians and other actors working in the population field to chart the way forward for achieving the ICPD goals and the MDGs by 2015. UNFPA, for its part, will work closely with the regional parliamentary groups to follow up on the above recommendations of the report.

The legislators who attended the first International Parliamentarians' Conference on ICPD Implementation (Ottawa, 2002) agreed that "life or death is a political decision". The decision and action must be taken now, as we only have until 2015 to dramatically reduce poverty, hunger, maternal and child mortality, HIV/AIDS and gender inequality.



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# INTRODUCTION

## HOUSE OF THE PEOPLE

Parliament-like assemblies are as old as the Vedic societies of ancient India, but the birth of the representative parliamentary system is usually dated to 930 CE, the first meeting of Iceland's Althing, an occasional assembly of clan representatives. The English parliament, the model for many of today's parliaments, first admitted representatives of the "commons" or non-noble people in 1286. Then as now, the chief executive depended on parliamentarians to vote funds for government operations.

Today, though forms of government vary, virtually all countries have legislative bodies which make laws and appropriate funds, and the generic term "parliamentarian" usually suggests a member of such a body. The closest links between government and the people are the parliamentarians whom they elect, and who consequently are best positioned to understand the values, concerns and needs of the electorate. This is why countries often call the legislative body the "house of the people". From that position, parliamentarians have become involved in issues and events far beyond their national borders.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) began its work in 1969, with a remit to provide population assistance to developing countries at their request.

are being debated; and in their own countries, in advocacy, adopting laws and providing funding for population programmes as a contribution to national development.

The first-ever International Conference of Parliamentarians on Population and Development was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka in 1979. Its goal was to exchange information and improve understanding about population issues and their impact on individual wellbeing and national development, and to discuss the need for international and domestic funding. This first meeting



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