

OTTAWA COMMITMENT

Partnering with Parliamentarians

2002 International Parliamentarians' Conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD)

Ottawa Commitment

We Parliamentarians from all over the world come to Ottawa to reaffirm our commitment to the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and to commit ourselves to action to advance the implementation of the Programme of Action and of the key actions identified in its five-year review.

We further reaffirm our commitment to sustainable development and its three pillars of economic growth, social progress and environmental protection.

We recognize, and accept, our crucial role, both individually and collectively, as the bridge between people and government -- as advocates for the rights and needs of the people, as legislators to make laws to protect these rights and as policy makers to mobilize the resources and create the enabling environment needed to address these needs.

We further recognize, and accept, population as a cross-cutting issue affecting all other development issues and thus as indispensable in achieving the Millennium Development Goals, in particular those aimed at eradicating poverty and hunger; improving maternal health, including efforts to combat unsafe abortion and promote sexual and reproductive health and rights; combating HIV/AIDS; providing universal primary education; and promoting gender equality and women's empowerment.

We further recognize the following:

- There is a 34 per cent shortfall in meeting the agreed global resource target for 2000 of \$17 billion for population and reproductive health programmes -- 24 per cent in domestic resources and approximately 55 per cent in external resources.
- Half of all people in the world live on less than \$2 per day; 1.2 billion people live on less than \$1 per day. More than half of these are women.
- Political instability impedes poverty eradication and sustainable development.
- Worldwide, some 840 million people are malnourished; millions of them, including 6 million children under the age of 5, die each year from the effects of chronic hunger and malnutrition.
- There are currently an estimated 40 million refugees and internally displaced persons, many of whom are without access to reproductive health services.

In 2000, 508 million people lived in water-stressed countries; by 2025, 3 billion people will be living in such countries.

There are 1 billion adolescents who are in or are about to enter their reproductive years, many of whom have no access to reproductive health education and services.

Each year, over 500,000 women die during pregnancy and childbirth; another 7 million suffer infection or injury.

Worldwide, 350 million women are denied access to a range of safe and effective contraceptives; each year, at least 80 million pregnancies are unwanted or ill-timed.

The reproductive health and family planning needs of millions of women throughout the world have been ignored, in particular in countries such as Afghanistan, where women have been forced to endure such unmet needs for decades.

Close to 40 million abortions occur each year, often under unsafe conditions. Some 78,000 women, or 227 a day, die every year as a result of unsafe interruptions of pregnancy.

- In 2001, 5 million people became infected with HIV; 800,000 of them were children; 3 million people died of AIDS that same year.
- There are 13.4 million AIDS orphans, many of whom are heads of households.
- Half of all new cases of HIV infection are among young people aged 15-24, with girls at particular risk.
- There are 40 million people living with HIV/AIDS; 28.5 million of them are in Africa.
- There is an annual 8 billion shortfall in condoms needed to provide protection against HIV/AIDS.

By 2050, the number of persons aged 60 years and over will increase from 600 million to almost 2 billion, and the proportion of such persons will double from 10 per cent to 21 per cent, many of whom will live in poverty and require public assistance for social and health services.

Call to action

We Parliamentarians here in Ottawa commit ourselves to the following actions and call on Parliamentarians everywhere to also commit themselves to these actions:

- Strive to attain 5 to 10 per cent of national development budgets for population and reproductive health programmes.
- Strive to fulfill the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance (ODA) and make every effort to mobilize the agreed estimated financial resources needed to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.
- Give high priority to achieving universal access to reproductive health services and commodities in national health and poverty-reduction frameworks, both in terms of budget allocations and in terms of programme activities.
- Formulate and implement policies and provide funding for sexual and reproductive health care for refugees and displaced persons.
- Enact, publicize and enforce laws and policies that promote and protect the human rights of the girl child and young women, that ensure women's equal access to and full participation in decision making at all levels, and that eliminate all forms of violence, coercion and discrimination against women, including various forms of harmful traditional, cultural and religious practices.
- Remove all gender gaps and inequalities in women's education, employment and livelihoods and adopt and enforce measures to educate girls, develop their technical and vocational skills and teach them to read and write.
- Promote the reduction of maternal mortality and morbidity and of unsafe abortion as a public health priority and as a reproductive rights concern.
- Support public health education to create awareness of the risks of pregnancy, labour and delivery and to increase understanding of the respective roles and responsibilities of family members, including men, in promoting and protecting maternal health.

- Give high priority to water, especially in rural areas, and sanitation in national development and poverty-reduction strategies and in particular to raising water productivity, stabilizing population and stabilizing climate.
- Improve access to agricultural resources, including land, for people living in poverty, especially women, and promote equitable and efficient distribution systems and sustainable development.
- Generate the political will needed to develop and integrate HIV/AIDS policies into national reproductive health policies and implement national action plans; enact legislation to ensure respect for the human rights and dignity of people living with HIV/AIDS and AIDS orphans; and provide education and services to prevent the transmission of all forms of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, and to provide treatment for these infections.
- Ensure that adolescents, both in and out of schools, receive the necessary information in appropriate languages, as well as services and opportunities to participate in the planning of policies and programmes aimed at them and to make responsible and informed choices and decisions regarding their sexual and reproductive health needs.
- Make every effort to achieve universal access to reproductive health services and commodities by the year 2015, encouraging governments, donors, civil society and private sector to work together, with government support, to achieve this goal.
- Create and/or strengthen national capacity to collect, analyse and disseminate statistical data, disaggregated by sex, in support of national development planning and to make the necessary resources available to do so.
- Promote and protect the full enjoyment of the economic, social, cultural, civil and political rights of older people and eliminate all forms of violence and discrimination against them; and empower older persons to fully and effectively participate in the economic, political and social lives of their societies.

Pledge

We Parliamentarians pledge, as public advocates, legislators and policy makers, to carry out these actions and to systematically and actively monitor the progress we make in doing so. We further pledge to report regularly on this progress through parliamentary groups and to meet again in two years to assess the results we have made, both individually and collectively.