

[HL1] EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Asian Parliamentary Policy Analysis Network (APPAN) jointly conducted a Workshop on Parliament's Role in Relation to the Millennium Declaration at New World Renaissance Hotel, Manila, Philippines on March 15-16, 2004. Forty (40) Asian Parliamentarians among ten (12) countries participated in order to more effectively address poverty, gender equality, women empowerment and trade issues that have far-reaching implications on human development. Countries in attendance include Bangladesh, Cambodia, China, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Vietnam.

The workshop was held in conjunction with the APPAN Third Steering Committee Meeting. The objective of this year's Steering Committee meeting was to formulate and adopt an APPAN Charter and An APPAN Work Plan for 2004. In light of the inability of the APPAN Chair, H.E. Mr. Tumur Ochir, Speaker of the Mongolian Parliament to attend, Dr. Sanjaasuengin Oyun, Member of the Mongolian Parliament and Leader of the Will-Republican party, chaired the Steering Committee meeting with the able support of the outgoing APPAN Secretariat, the Thai based King Prajadhipok's Institute (KPI) in collaboration with the incoming Secretariat, the Philippine based Centre for Legislative Development (CLD).

Workshop Programme (Refer to Annex B)

The APPAN Workshop five (5) Plenary Sessions, as follows:

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| Plenary One | - | Inaugural Program |
| Plenary Two | - | The Millennium Declaration and Parliamentarians |
| Plenary Three | - | Trade and Human Development Post Cancun and Goal 8 of the Millennium Declaration |
| Plenary Four | - | Organizing to Make a Difference: The Women's Political Caucus |
| Plenary Five | - | Conclusion and Workshop Follow-Up. |

The APPAN workshop aimed at stimulating analysis of the Millennium Declaration and the realization and implementation of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in the different Asian countries, to provide update on the trade issues of concern for developing country parliamentarians from the Asia Region in light of the outcomes of the 5th WTO Ministerial meeting held in Cancun, Mexico in September 2003 and to facilitate the formation and launching of an APPAN Women's Political Caucus.

Plenary One: Inaugural Programme (Refer to Summary of Proceedings and Annexes C-G)

Presented during the Inaugural Program were the speakers, participants and the two-day workshop design. This was followed by a discussion on the Overall objectives and previous initiatives undertaken by APPAN. The Inaugural Address elaborated on the establishment of APPAN based on the commitments of member parliaments To strengthen regional partnerships between parliamentarians, civil society organizations and other APPAN members.

The Inaugural Programme was concluded with The delivery of the keynote address by Ms. Erna Witoelar, United Nations Special Ambassador for the Millennium Development Goals for Asia and the Pacific. Following a presentation of the achievements and challenges facing the Millennium campaign, Ms. Witoelar emphasized the need of widespread stakeholder involvement to guarantee adequate national participation and ownership in the realization of the MDGs across the region. Furthermore widespread stakeholder involvement is necessary to generate the monitoring mechanisms required to pressurize governments to fulfill their commitment towards achieving the MDGs.

PLENARY TWO : THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION AND PARLIAMENTARIANS (Refer to Summary of Proceedings and Annexes H-L)

A presentation of the Millennium Development Goals in Asia and the Pacific followed, clarifying the MDG agenda and that all United Nation agencies have an equal role countries achieve the MDGs by 2015. The two partnerships engaging Asia and the Pacific in the MDG Movement, namely: the UN Millennium Project and the UN Millennium Campaign were tackled. Also cited was the UNDP-UNESCAP 1st Regional MDG Report, which led to UNDP committing US\$ 5M to achieve the MDGs. This serves as a call towards localizing MDGs underscoring core initiatives to come from the country level with UNDP providing catalytic support. This discussion was followed by a presentation on the role of the legislators to include:

- A) Enabling gender budget and impact of budget appropriated to poverty and environment
- B) Legislative oversight or a watchdog function to include the MDGs and
- C) Governance leadership referring to political agenda and political will to mobilize resources.

During the discussion, the APPAN Women's Caucuses and civil society networks were identified as essential elements to advance the achievement of MDGs.

Remarks from three countries, namely Cambodia, Mongolia and Pakistan, were solicited on the implementation of the MDGs. All three have shown their commitments to achieving MDGs by 2015 through their various initiatives and targets particularly in education, health, environment, gender equality and other notable poverty reduction strategies. Cambodia stressed and elaborated upon its ongoing efforts on improved food security, gender gaps and employment for women, among others. Mongolia's significant efforts in primary education improvement for both girls and boys and reduction of infant mortality rates illustrated successful initiatives that were widely noted. Pakistan shared significant variety of experiences and diverse endeavors on primary health care programs, monitoring of quality standards of education and gender and women empowerment. Both

Cambodia and Pakistan have particular citations of trade issues and strengthening of their financial system in relation to poverty reduction initiatives. On poverty reduction strategies all the three have shown in various localization, decentralization and devolution of power initiatives in relation to the MDG implementation for improved delivery of basic social services in poor and vulnerable communities, rural and remote areas and disadvantaged provinces. In addition, three countries have embraced MDGs as targets and milestones, which they have projected and elaborated upon in their respective development agenda, where they try to take into account both economic growth and human development growth. Significantly, these three countries monitor closely efforts along MDGs to see how they are progressing in the fight against poverty. Cambodia has adopted laws aimed at improving, and monitoring the conservation of natural resources. Mongolia keeps track of records of enrollees, monitors reduction of the under-five mortality rate. In Pakistan, minimum quality standards are something that is being worked on in the fields of education, sanitation, water and other social sectors. To a varying degree MDGs have critically served as an important framework and targets for the rethinking, reforming and adjustments of plans and actions to include the laws and other initiatives of these three countries.

This was followed by a panel discussion on “Advancing the Implementation of the MDGs: the Role of Parliamentarians”. From exchanges generated from the panel particularly from the different country experiences and observations, consensus was reached along major concerns discussed below. Specific clarifications raised particularly by China, Mongolia, Pakistan and Philippines on specific MDG related issues contributed to a plenary consensus on the following highlights of recommendations:

- a) Parliaments can work with civil society and this can be done in formal partnerships.
- b) Parliaments need to look at the resource picture because as always, the existing budgets of nations are miniscule to meet financial requirements of development. Also, while governments are concerned with generating sufficient resources for development, Parliaments need to make informed decisions in order to help generate positive impacts of trade and investment flow also in the context of globalization.
- c) Parliaments must begin to shape pro-poor policies to achieve the quality of life along the lines and targets stipulated by the MDGs. The scourge of corruption is a crucial issue hampering development efforts across the region and all participating countries agreed that radical and likewise, decisive anti-corruption measures must be put in place to facilitate the realization of the MDGs. Measures have to be taken to sustain pro-poor policies even in conditions wherein the economy is not growing; economic income of the country is relatively small from where services would be supported.
- d) There was also a call for countries that not yet had submitted their MDG reports to do so.

More intense deliberations in small groups were done particularly on how the collaboration among parliamentarians through APPAN would be able to enhance the implementation of the MDGs, how women parliamentarians address the MDGs and how parliamentarians can help APPAN members to promote trade. Discussions on country specific issues preceded the formulation of the following recommendations:

MDG Group (Cambodia and Lao PDR)

- a) Awareness-raising among parliaments on how best to address poverty and corruption that contribute to deteriorating human conditions;
- b) Advocacy assistance to influence and collaborate with financial institutions (IMF, WB, ADB) with respect to harmonizing and achieving pro-MDG/pro-poor policy for loan restructuring;
- c) Policy monitoring across parliaments to rectify and minimize bad practices of governments; and
- d) Capacity building of parliamentarians and parliamentary support staff to improve institutional reforms, fiscal management, and foreign assistance potential.

Gender Group (Cambodia, Lao PDR, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Vietnam)

To achieve MDG No. 5 on: elimination of gender disparity in primary and secondary education, preferably by 2005, and all levels of education not later than 2015, the group recommended among others, that: women should have knowledge on information management by sharing experiences through parliamentary exchange via electronic networking. They need to develop and advocate gender responsive budgeting. Women parliamentarians should look into existing laws and to initiate, amend, and repeal discriminatory laws as well as mandate the political parties to have one-third of the party list of women.

- a) On Getting Organized to Make a Difference: The Women's Political Caucus, there is a need to increase the number of women in parliament. Also, there is a need to have information on how women can vote for women "getting them in the door" and how to influence women to vote for women. This can be part of the agenda of the caucus. Ways of "getting in the door" through political party. One-third of the party membership should be women; assigning a watchdog; making arrangements among women. All political parties should have women in the central executive committee.
- b) The Resolution on the Formulation of a Regional Women's Caucus should address the following: Statement of commitment, and of goals, and of objectives, MDGs, APPAN Charter; Statement of the situation —of the problem—in terms of representation. These actions may

consider various mechanisms to advance Experience Sharing, Knowledge Management, Capacity Building, Resource Mobilization and Legal Reforms.

Trade Group (China, Mongolia, Pakistan, Philippines and Vietnam)

- a) APPAN should be able to assist by providing sufficient information to make comprehensive and factually grounded decisions and determining the policy instruments that should be in place to improve developing countries market access and increase their possibilities to benefit from globalization. Awareness raising among parliamentarians should be able to deepen their understanding of trade issues and hence, not become vulnerable target for lobby groups in the handling of these.
- b) APPAN should be developed to become a vehicle for parliamentarians to create an environment that improve developing countries competitiveness and bring about mutual benefits from globalization.
- c) APPAN members should work together in influencing decision-makers in developed countries in identification of trends in common products that affect the APPAN countries through information exchange.
- d) APPAN should create an ad hoc working committee/group to raise awareness on the possible benefits for both developing countries (to increase market access for developing countries (to have various forms of trade barriers/subsidies harmonized and lowered). The findings could be presented in workshops and/or on the web page or through video conferencing.

PLENARY THREE: TRADE AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT POST CANCUN AND GOAL 8 OF THE MILLENNIUM DECLARATION

(Refer to Summary of Proceedings and Annexes M-O)

The discussion on Trade and Human Development revolved around the WTO legal framework pertaining to sectors of key significance to developing countries other regional/global trade issues relating to human development issues in Asia. The point was made that the WTO had neglected to address the crucial issue of eliminating, or at least reducing, restrictions pertaining to trade in agricultural products. This is of key concern for economic development as many Asian countries have a potential comparative advantage on the global market in agricultural products. Similar concerns were made with regards to the Fisheries sector. Quality standards, sanitary regulations, tariffs and non-tariff barriers, governmental subsidies, depletion of fish stocks and environmental subsidies and their impact on the development of poor and vulnerable groups are some of the factors participating parliamentarians wanted to obtain increased understanding and knowledge about.

The Region should work towards the protection of indigenous knowledge since many products in Asia, are not internationally known, and should be ascertained.

Energy Services in most developing countries, which is a huge business with high potential to increase economic growth, are confronting the challenge of making a strategic response in this area, which will balance the contribution of foreign capital and technology, while ascertaining public control, employment, access to opportunities of the population. Similarly, in Environmental Services, developing countries are confronting the challenge attributed to making a strategic response to ensure that liberalization does not penalize the poor, and will empower them at the community level to protect their own environmental assets.

Strategic responses must also be done to address the negative impact of the Movement of Natural Persons (MNPs) on human development, such as the social consequences of the separation of family members, exploitation and abuse of workers, which need corrective action.

New disciplines on investment should be pursued at the bilateral and regional levels, as they impact on human development. On accession to WTO, the concern of acceding countries, especially the LDCs are fragile and therefore their accession must not constrain their human development policies.

Presented was UNDP's project initiative in Pakistan to better equip the people to understand the impact of trade policies. The project strategy is on the subject of participatory national seminars; constant interaction with stakeholders; donor coordination, and partnerships. On Legislators' Ability to Defend Human Development Goals in Trade Negotiations, it was discussed that Parliaments must be analyzed in Asian context. There is a need to know where parliaments stand in many of our developing countries to include individual roles, whether they are part of the state machinery or not, and what role they have in influencing policy and legislation. It is hoped that MDG will be pursued by parliaments of 189 governments, which have signed the MDGs. But the owner of responsibility is still with the governments who signed them.

The discussion on Advancing Global Market Access for Developing Countries: The Role of Parliamentarians, was concluded as follows:

- a) Governments should accept responsibility for their commitments. The major function of parliaments is lawmaking, but in support of the fulfillment of the MDGs, a mechanism needs to be created for its implementation at the country level. In the fulfillment of the MDGs the role of local governments must be considered. They are important actors in light of their proximity to the grass roots and knowledge of local customs and traditions.
- b) Due to country-specific constraints, which delimit the capability of parliamentarians in pushing for the realization of the MDGs, there is a need to work in alliance with many other groups (i.e., intellectual/academic support, civil society participation). Parliamentarians have here an important role to play since they undertake legislative

measures to inform the citizens and its government about the MDG goals. The main problem in developing countries is how to keep the continuity in policies.

- c) Trade policies are not gender neutral but gender blind. The respective Governments are the most responsible in implementing policies for gender and it should not only be UN's role. There is a need for disaggregating data to become the basis of women friendly policies.
- d) Legislators still have a major role in globalization, in creating safety nets for domestic producers/losers in globalization, providing social welfare, etc.
- e) Regarding Movement of Natural Persons (MNPs), the aim is to increase foreign exchange earnings by facilitating access of low and medium skilled laborers from developing countries to access the developed countries labor markets.

Since UN has a membership of 189 countries, the responsibility is still with the UN system to advance the global drive towards committing governments to MDGs. Parliaments have different arrangements in each country and that need to be kept in mind with some parliamentarians having limited access to the actions of their governments.

PLENARY FOUR : ORGANIZING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE: THE WOMEN'S POLITICAL CAUCUS (Refer to Summary of Proceedings and Annexes P-U)

Women's political participation is a means to address the MDGs, from poverty to global partnerships for development. While the number of women parliamentarians has increased, they are not making a significant difference in discussions, parliament agenda (whether in committees or in plenary sessions). They have to organize in order to develop synergies and translate their numbers into a political force—into strengths that will enable them to influence agenda, budget allocation and implementation mechanisms. The country specific exchange of experiences was concluded with the presentation of a Resolution towards an Asian-Pacific Women Parliamentarian's Caucus.

There are however success stories. There is a women's caucus in the US and in Uganda. In the US, they have been able to pass legislations like the Violence Against Women Act, Ownership Act, Family and Medical Leave Act. In Uganda, there is use of gender sensitive language in the Constitution, and they have established the Equal Opportunities Commission. Sharing their country specific experiences are women panelists including a Member of the National Assembly, Lao PDR), a Member of the House of Representatives of the Philippines' Lone District of Las Piñas City), a Member of Parliament of Thailand, a Member of Parliament of Pakistan, the Secretary General of Parliament of Sri Lanka and a Member of Parliament of Mongolia.

In Lao PDR, women parliamentarian's representation seems to be stronger in poorer provinces. The influence of women has increased. Capacity development of women is spreading along non-traditional areas, like in security, economics and finance. Women's participation in key committees in economic/finance and legislative was also considered.

In the Philippines, challenges of women parliamentarians were met in two areas to include that of convincing male colleagues of the importance of gender-sensitive legislation, and public information drive to reach out to women and children. A group of Lady Legislators of the 12th congress has been formed and in order to strengthen their presence and influence in the lower chamber, the members agreed to actively participate in committees and hearings. Membership of Lady Legislators of the 12th Congress is nonpartisan, cuts across party lines, so as to improve the status and quality of life of women and children. They were able to push for passage of bills like: Anti-trafficking act of women and minors including stiffer penalties for violators, Anti-child labour act, Violence Against Women Act.

In the case of Thailand, women caucus was established under parliamentary regulations. Members include women house representatives, women senators, former house representatives and senators invited by executive committee, as well as, honorary members. Caucus budget comes from contributions, donations, and financial support from national and international organizations.

In Pakistan, women's opportunity of getting into parliament was also abrogated and improvements have to be adopted in order to facilitate women participation specifically in the parliament. As recognized, civil society can play a vital role in women's empowerment to remove popular misconception in order to have women in parliament because it is the only way to improve women's status. As experienced during those times that there were women in parliament, significant contributions and changes were realized with women participation. For example, The Philippine Women Parliamentarians were able to push for passage of bills that seek to address leading problems that mainly affect women, children and family such as the Anti-trafficking act of women and minors including stiffer penalties for violators, Anti-child labor act, and the Violence Against Women Act. In Mongolia, Women Parliamentarians have worked with NGOs in drafting law against domestic violence. In Sri Lanka, the Women's Caucus is involved in addressing giving suitable education, amending labor laws, malnutrition among female children, assisting female refugees due to civil war, and prevention of domestic violence.

In Sri Lanka, initiatives to form a women's caucus following the parliamentary elections in 2000, which consisted of all female members of parliament irrespective of their party. The caucus aimed at acting as catalyst to sensitize people about women's rights. Some issues and challenges confronted by the caucus include its unofficial status and lack of funding support.

In Mongolia, the many years of communism influenced the promotion of women's participation, which is why many women's organizations are funded mostly by the state. Yet still, women are underrepresented in decision-making positions due to political, economic and social barriers. This has generated reluctance among

women to enter politics, while political parties in addition are reluctant to introduce women candidates.

PLENARY FIVE : CONCLUSION AND WORKSHOP SUMMARY

(Refer to Summary of Proceedings and Annexes V-X)

Taking off from the minutes of the meeting of the APPAN Steering Committee held in the morning of March 15, 2004, the assembly approved the draft Charter with all the necessary revisions and likewise, agreed to the sending of letters to Heads of Parliaments to seek their opinion and their concurrence to Charter and acceptance of formal membership in APPAN. Based also on the minutes, members of this workshop who are member-parliaments will be founding members of the APPAN Charter. Ratification will be on next General Assembly.

The relationship of UNDP and APPAN was clarified as a donor relationship, and that UNDP will continue to provide support until financial sourcing of APPAN is properly established.

The APPAN Workplan for 2004, as approved by the Steering Committee during their meeting, was presented to the assembly with the following highlights:

- a) The need to follow-up on this meeting, particularly on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and the WTO issues.
- b) Since the Regional Caucus of Women Parliamentarians' Resolution was approved during the workshop, the caucus's activities can now begin within the year.
- c) For the Civil Society Think Tank and Capacity Building Sub-Network Organization, activities can also begin by identifying those Civil Society Organizations (CSCs) who support parliaments.

As for APPAN Resource Mobilization, Belgium and CIDA could be worthwhile to consider in the APPAN resource mobilization strategy in light of their extensive support for parliamentary activities. On gender equality issues, it was pointed out that this was not only a concern of Women's' Caucuses but of APPAN in general.

SYNTHESIS

Based on the concluding statements of the outgoing Chair of APPAN representing the Mongolian Parliament, which were drawn from the insights of the 12 countries that participated in the Workshop, the following areas of concerns were raised as the primary focus of APPAN as it moves on to fulfill its role.

The formation of APPAN is a tool to strengthen Asian parliamentarians' policy analysis capacity, their access to reliable research information, and technical services through increased regional parliamentary collaboration, information, and experience sharing. This APPAN meeting was focused on the Millennium Declaration, emphasizing parliamentary advancement of the MDGs.

The multitude of suggestions pertaining to cross-country experience includes sharing on awareness raising, advocacy measures, and capacity-building initiatives, and policy formulation collaboration between Asian parliamentarians.

The assembly approved a resolution for the formation of the Regional Women Parliamentarians' Caucus under the overall umbrella of the Asian Parliamentary Policy Analysis Network (APPAN). APPAN will be formalized through the recently adopted draft of the Charter, which will be sent to the Parliaments to include a letter of invitation for official membership to the APPAN. This institutionalization signifies the group's firm commitment to advance the realization of the MDGs in the 11 countries that participated.

The venues being considered for the next (4th) APPAN Steering Committee meeting to be held in conjunction with the (4th) APPAN General Assembly meeting, scheduled to be held in the 1st or 2nd quarter of 2005, are, are Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia or Islamabad, Pakistan. The Steering Committee considered Pakistan as the appropriate venue.

Finally the Chairmanship of the APPAN was officially handed over to the Philippine Congress.

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