



IEPPFD
Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development

Closing Statement

By

Hon. Ruth Genner, MP (Switzerland)

IEPPFD President

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I address you as the President of the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development. Our Forum was founded in the year 2000 and its members are all party parliamentary groups within Europe. We are still growing and the latest group to join us is the group from Lithuania. I am quite grateful that so many experts as well as parliamentarians could meet at this conference on population and development and that we could learn for our future work. The tasks still ahead of us are big and the challenges to realise the goals of the Cairo Conference are huge.

As a parliamentarian, I was impressed to hear about the great variations and differences from one country to the other within Europe; they are getting bigger although all countries have adapted to the Cairo Plan of Action. I see this as a chance to learn from each other; to learn of excellent examples such as the one of Norway with its outstanding policy in the field of gender equality. This approach can really make a difference.

In the role of the President of the Forum I focused on the contributions parliamentarians can make to implement their ICPD Programme of Action. I am sure that the aspect of sexual and reproductive health and rights must be in the heart of our development policies in the same way as they are in the centre of the Millennium Development Goals. Within them you find the promotion of



gender equality and empowerment of women as well as the reduction of child mortality and the improvement of maternal health.

There is no doubt that for many approaches we must have the necessary funds to provide the needed services. I expect funds especially from the wealthy countries. But nevertheless I like to recall that there are also goals which do not cost money and we must fight for them in our parliaments and within society. I would like to give three examples. One is getting more women involved in politics and in NGOs, especially in their headquarters. One other is speaking about the risk and prevention of HIV/AIDS. As third example, we must fight and take measures against the discrimination of homosexual couples. I hope that the present parliamentarians become encouraged by this conference to go further with their work so that women's and children's lives can be saved and that human rights are preserved.

I am grateful that we have young parliamentarians here and this is most important as we need the message coming from the young people.

On behalf of the Inter-European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development, I thank you, Madam Chairman, and the organisers of this Conference and that so many parliamentarians could participate.

Thank you

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