PREAMBLE

We, Parliamentarians from 20 African countries, meeting in Dakar, Senegal, 6 June, 2004 at the ICPD At Ten Round Table of Parliamentarians, issue the following Declaration:

1. We reaffirm our commitment to the principles, objectives and actions contained in the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (Cairo, 5-13 September 1994) and in the document Key Actions for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development (New York, 30 June-2 July 1999).

2. We further commit ourselves to the implementation of the recommendations emanating from the ICPD at Ten Review, building on the Ottawa Commitment (21-22 November 2002) and within the framework of the New Partnership for Africa’s Development (NEPAD).

3. We recognize that the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) cannot be attained unless the ICPD Programme of Action is fully implemented in particular the promotion of sexual and reproductive health and rights including for the youth to improve maternal health and to combat unsafe abortion and HIV/AIDS, promotion of gender equality and equity and women’s empowerment, provision of universal primary education, thus, contributing to poverty reduction.

4. We recognize and accept our pivotal role, both individually and collectively, as the critical link between Communities and Government as advocates for the rights and needs of the people, in full respect of various religious, ethical and cultural values and in conformity with universally recognized international human rights.

5. We recognize our role as legislators to make laws to protect the rights of the people that we represent and to ensure parliamentary oversight of such laws in their implementation, thus creating a favourable enabling environment for the implementation of the ICPD At Ten 10 outcome.

6. We recognize that social and cultural realities present challenges but also opportunities and positive entry points for attainment of the ICPD goals and therefore, we reaffirm our determination to forge strong partnership with all stakeholders including traditional, religious and cultural leaders.
7. We reaffirm our determination to work towards prevention and resolution of conflicts in order to ensure conducive and peaceful environment for the implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action, poverty reduction and sustainable development programmes.

8. Finally, we reaffirm our determination to intensify our resource mobilization efforts.

CALL TO ACTION

We African and Arab Parliamentarians meeting in Dakar, Senegal, 6 June, 2004 at the ICPD At Ten Round Table of Parliamentarians, commit ourselves to the following measures and call on our colleagues throughout the African continent to also commit themselves to these actions:

1. The Family

Formulate policies and enact legislation to ensure gender equality and to provide support to all family members including parents, legal guardians and other caregivers in the fulfilment of their responsibilities and duties.

Empower all family members to recognise and exercise their human rights through advocacy and other dissemination actions as well as provide regular and effective parliamentary oversight of the implementation of all family related policies, laws and programmes.

2. Reproductive Health and Reproductive Rights

Give high priority, through advocacy, policies, legislation and budget allocations, to empowering communities to exercise their reproductive rights of access to quality reproductive health services and commodities within the context of national health sector reforms and poverty-reduction frameworks.

Redouble efforts to reduce maternal mortality and morbidity, including by addressing fistula, and to reduce the incidence of unsafe abortion as a public health priority and as a reproductive rights concern.

Formulate policies and advocate for programmes to address the social and health needs of refugees and internally displaced persons including their sexual and reproductive health needs.
3. HIV/AIDS

Translate political will and commitment, through appropriate laws and policies and adequate resources, into action needed to develop and integrate HIV/AIDS policies into national reproductive health policies and implement national action plans; enact and ensure enforcement of legislation to assure respect for the human rights and dignity of people living with HIV/AIDS and AIDS orphans; provide education and services to prevent the transmission of, and to treat all forms of sexually transmitted infections, including HIV/AIDS, in particular among the youth.

4. Adolescents and Youth

Ensure that adolescents, both in and out of schools, receive the necessary information and education and have access to youth-friendly services to exercise their reproductive rights.

Promote laws, policies and programmes that are culturally sensitive, and ensure youth and community participation in their development and implementation.

5. Gender equality, equity and empowerment of women

Advocate for, enact, and enforce laws and policies that promote and protect the human rights of the girl child and 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 practices.

Empower communities to protect the rights of women and to internalise these laws into their daily lives.

Enact new laws to 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.

6. Data for development

Advocate and provide the necessary resources to strengthen national capacity to collect, analyse and translate health, demographic and socio-economic data, disaggregated by sex, into actionable policies and programmes, and for evaluation and monitoring purposes.

7. Resource Mobilization and Partnerships

Strengthen advocacy towards attainment of 5 to 10 per cent of national development budgets devoted to population and reproductive health programmes, as agreed in the Ottawa Declaration.

Call upon donors to redouble efforts to fulfil the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP for official development assistance (ODA) needed to implement the ICPD Programme of Action.
Encourage community-level resource mobilization through counterpart contribution.

Promote and strengthen partnerships with parliamentarians in other regions, with donors, NGOs and the private sector to leverage human and financial resources for further implementation of the ICPD PoA.

PLEDGE

We, African and Arab 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 on an annual basis, through the regional parliamentary groups, on progress made and results achieved.

6 June 2004
Dakar, Senegal.