



JOINT CANADIAN AND EUROPEAN PARLIAMENTARIAN STUDY TOUR TO GHANA ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS – JULY 2007

Accra, Ghana ♦ 21-28 July 2007

♦ STUDY TOUR OUTLINE



I. BACKGROUND

At the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo, 179 countries worldwide agreed to allocate an annual sum of \$17 billion by 2000 and \$18.5 billion by 2005 for population and reproductive health programmes in developing countries. Two thirds of the target would come from developing countries themselves and the remaining one third would come from external donor funding.

While developing countries as a whole have mobilized most of their two thirds share, the poorest countries continue to depend entirely on external assistance; they will not be able to meet the needs of their populations unless donors increase their support. On the other hand, the current donor support, about \$3 billion a year, is only half of the agreed requirement for this year. In the face of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, and with an unprecedented number of adolescents entering into reproductive age, there is a growing need for a reliable and sufficient supply of reproductive health commodities and services.

Another important challenge for advancing the ICPD agenda is the creation and nurturing of an enabling environment in the domestic context, which can be realized through making positive changes in the national laws and policies on population and development. Significant progress has been made in this area in the past decade. For example, 96% of the 151 countries that responded to the United Nations Population Fund's (UNFPA) global survey in 2003 reported actions to integrate population concerns into development policies and strategies.

Ghana – SRHR at a glance

Total population (millions) (2005)	22.1
Population Growth Rate, Percent	2.2
Life expectancy (M/F)	57.9
% contraceptive prevalence for women aged 15-49: any method	22.0
% contraceptive prevalence for women aged 15-49: modern methods	13.3
Total Fertility Rate per Woman 15-49	4.11
Maternal mortality ratio (per 100,000 live births)	540
Infant mortality rate per 1,000 live births	57.8
HIV prevalence rate (%) (15-24) M/F	2.2
Antenatal Care, At Least One Visit, Percent	88

HIV knowledge, Women 15-24 Who Know That a Person Can Protect Herself from HIV by Consistent Condom Use, Per Cent	70
% births by skilled attendants	44
Unmet Need for Family Planning, Total, Percent	23.0
Public Expenditures on Health (% of GDP)	2.30

Source: Country Profiles for Population a Reproductive Health, Policy Developments and Indicators 2005

II. JUSTIFICATION

Ghana, situated on the west coast of Africa, is one of the least developed countries with an average GNP per capita of just \$390 a year. Roughly half of the population live on one dollar a day or less.

The government views the country's total fertility rate (4.11 births per woman), and maternal mortality ratio (540 deaths per 100,000 live births) as unacceptably high. Only 44 per cent of all births take place with skilled attendants, although 88% of women receive at least one antenatal care visit. With HIV/AIDS prevalence at 2.2 per cent among those of reproductive age, the government has adopted a multi-sectoral approach to control the pandemic. Ghana AIDS Commission was set up to coordinate prevention activities and the provision of antiretroviral therapy. Religious and traditional leaders have been enlisted to lend support to the campaign against HIV as well as assist those living with the virus.

Ghana has adopted the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) concept of reproductive health and has formulated policies, standards and protocols to guide the delivery of reproductive health services. Health facilities at the primary health care level offer reproductive health, including family planning, in an integrated manner through 1,050 public sector health centers and over 12,753 community outreach sites. Ten regional and 110 district hospitals are designated as main referral centers for complicated pregnancies. In addition, quality reproductive health services are provided through 1,039 private facilities.

Ghana ratified the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) in 1986. Gender issues have received considerable attention as a result of national efforts to implement the ICPD Programme of Action and the Platform for Action of the Fourth World Conference on Women (known also as the Beijing Platform of Action). Under these initiatives, certain harmful practices, such as female genital mutilation, have been outlawed. The Parliament passed the Children's Bill, which raised the minimum age at marriage from 16 to 18 years. The Government has adopted Affirmative Action Policy Guidelines, which call for an increase to 40 per cent the representation of women in key positions in public service and in national executive or policy-making institutions.

III. PURPOSE

The weeklong tour will raise awareness amongst Canadian and European Parliamentarians of the unmet sexual and reproductive health needs of Ghanaians and will enable participating Parliamentarians to gain first-hand experience of the reality of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights situation in a developing country.

Filling the existing gaps in laws, policies and funding in order to work towards achieving both the goals set out at the International Conference on Population and Development in 1994, and the Millennium Development Goals, depends on the political will of governments in both developed and developing countries. Parliamentarians play a key role in advancing the development agenda through mobilizing the necessary support and through holding government leaders accountable to their commitments.

IV. ORGANISERS

- ❖ **The European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (EPF)** is a Brussels-based Parliamentary network that serves as a platform for cooperation and coordination for the 25 all-party groups in Parliaments throughout Europe that focus on improving sexual and reproductive health and rights at home and abroad through national and regional health and foreign aid budgets.
- ❖ **Action Canada for Population and Development (ACPD)** is a human rights advocacy organization that seeks to enhance the quality of life of women, men and children by promoting progressive policies in the field of international development with a primary focus on reproductive and sexual rights and health and an emerging focus on international migration and development.
- ❖ **The Canadian Federation for Sexual Health (CFSH)** is a national network that takes leadership in advancing sexual and reproductive health and rights in Canada and abroad through:
 - Public education and awareness
 - Support for the delivery of programs and services in Canada
 - Advocacy
 - International projects and liaison with the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)

V. DATE AND VENUE

The study tour will take place from 21-28 July 2007 in various locations throughout Ghana, with Accra serving as a hub.

VI. PARTICIPANTS

12 participants are expected to take part in the study tour:

- ❖ 4 Parliamentarians representing the four parties in the Canadian Parliament
- ❖ 4 Parliamentarians representing various countries and political parties in Europe and/or the European Parliament
- ❖ 4 staff members

VII. COST OF PARTICIPATION

The cost of travel and other associated expenses for Parliamentarians will be covered by the study tour budget. Travel will be in economy class and accommodation in a hotel with good standing will be arranged. Modest per diems will be provided to meet incidental costs.

VIII. Host

The Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) will be the host organization for the study tour. PPAG was established in 1967 as a Non - Governmental Organisation affiliated to the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The Association has a long history of leadership in Family Planning programmes in Ghana and has integrated Family Planning into Community Development Projects. PPAG now focuses on youth (who constitute 54% of the population) and provides young people with the knowledge and means to exercise their basic rights to decide freely and responsibly on their Sexual and Reproductive Health.

IX. AGENDA

The study tour to Ghana will include visits to various local NGO projects dealing with sexual and reproductive health issues. The Parliamentary delegation will find out about how Ghana is aiming to achieve the Millennium Development Goals related to health and will meet with state officials, the Ghanaian Parliamentary Committee on Population and Development as well as local embassies and UN agencies.

Draft programme

DAY	ACTIVITY
20 JULY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure from Canada - arrive Accra in the evening of July 21st
21 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Departure from Europe and arrive Accra in the evening.
22 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest ½ day • Lunch • Welcome, introduction and orientation with entire delegation • Informal dinner
23 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning briefing • Welcome and introduction by PPAG • Presentation of SRHR situation in Ghana • Lunch • Visit of PPAG facilities/projects and discussion with staff, clients etc. • Dinner
24 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning briefing • Departure to a select Ghanaian region/town • Lunch • Intro to local staff and volunteers of select NGO • Short tour of a project and meeting/discussion with staff and clients • Dinner /group meeting – recap of experiences
25 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning briefing • Visit of 2nd project • Lunch • Leave for Accra • Dinner
26 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning briefing • Meeting with Ghanaian MPs (Population and Development Committee) • Lunch • Official meetings in Accra • Reception
27 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Morning briefing • Press conference/Official meetings continued • Farewell lunch – Group wrap up meeting and conclusion • Tour of city/Free time
28 July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Travel back

X. EXPECTED OUTCOME

- ❖ A declaration committing Parliamentarians to carry out Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights follow-up actions within their respective Parliaments upon return from Ghana

