

# From Commitment to Action

## A Factsheet on Implementing the 2013 Asia and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development **MODALITIES OF IMPLEMENTATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

### Introduction

The 1994 International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) is heralded for putting people at the centre of population and sustainable development efforts, and in particular the fundamental rights and freedoms of women and girls to have control over their sexual and reproductive lives. As part of the ICPD Beyond 2014 review process, governments joined by civil society representatives met for the Sixth Asian and Pacific Population Conference (6APPC) in Bangkok. The 2013 Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development - a progressive and visionary agenda for the region - was adopted at the 6APPC. It reaffirms gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) as indispensable to sustainable development, which was also underscored in the subsequent global Framework of Actions for the follow up to the ICPD Beyond 2014.

### Strengthening Political Accountability

Governments emphasized the need to ensure stronger political commitment and establish or strengthen **national, sub regional and regional mechanisms** to assess the implementation of Programme of Action of ICPD, the key actions for the further implementation, the recommendations arising from their subsequent reviews, and the recommendation of the present Declaration. Governments also committed to a **review in 2018** of the progress achieved at the midpoint toward the Seventh Asian Pacific Population Conference, and to conduct regular **monitoring and evaluation** by national authorities of progress made (209).

### Data and Statistics

Governments committed to strengthen the capacity of national statistical offices, institutions and mechanisms to employ holistic approaches to generate, analyse and disseminate reliable data, disaggregated by sex, age, and other categories, and to increase the use of data for policy development by relevant national authorities.

Specifically, it called for the strengthening of national statistical systems at all levels to produce reliable, disaggregated and internationally comparable statistics

on population, social and economic development in a timely manner to help **monitor** development (198), in addition to the assessment of civil registration and vital statistics systems, including birth and death registration, and the development of a national multispectral improvement plan to strengthen coordination and capacity of institutions (212).

### Ensuring Adequate Financing

Domestic resource mobilisation, resource tracking, public and private financing and ensuring the continuation and fulfilment of official development assistance commitments made by international donors is focused on to fully implement the ICPD PoA and its recommendations from the review process including the Declaration (210). Specifically, it highlights the need for **greater resource flows** and assistance for the region of Asia and the Pacific, particularly the least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and Small Island Developing States (68).

### Strengthening Healthcare Systems

The Declaration recommends strengthening access for all to the primary health care system through **appropriate public spending on health care** as determined by national contexts (78); in addition to strengthening national health systems and implementing multi-sectoral national policies for the provision of equitable universal health coverage (107).

### Tracking Resources for Women, Girls and Older Persons

Increasing and **tracking investments in gender equality** including through mainstreaming a gender perspective and **gender-sensitive budgeting** in resource allocation, and ensuring the necessary human, financial and material resources to ensure gender equality and the advancement of women and girls at all levels within comprehensive multisectoral national plans for gender equality, as well as through enhanced and increased international cooperation (129) is recommended. It also calls for the consideration of **increasing domestic and international resources** to support developing countries in the implementation of the Madrid International Plan of Action on Ageing, and to coordinate and **track resource allocations for ageing** (152).

## Effective Partnerships, Cooperation and Coordination Mechanisms

Active engagement with all relevant stakeholders, communities, civil society, and parliamentarians was acknowledged as essential and instrumental for the successful implementation of the ICPD PoA and this Declaration. It emphasizes the creation of an **enabling environment for the partnership and participation of civil society** and community-based organizations and increased space for constructive dialogue at the local, national and regional levels (88, 213) and strengthening partnerships and engagement with **philanthropic foundations and the private sector** (214), in addition to empowering communities to ensure the accountability of Governments in implementation of recommendations and policy actions, and the accountability of health and social service providers (215). In particular, they recommended to ensure through the **Regional Coordination Mechanisms** and in

cooperation with other regional and national UN teams and Member States, the integration of the Declaration into the UN Development Assistance Framework at the country level (218d). It also recommends the designation of a **national focal point agency** to coordinate implementation at the national level (206).

The Declaration emphasises regional cooperation, including through **South-South cooperation and triangular cooperation** as a key modality for implementation, and governments reflected on the need for technical as well as financial support from international organisations in addition to triangular and South-South cooperation (216). Delegations also highlighted the need to strengthen multi- and bilateral frameworks, especially in the case of migration.

# Critical Note



The Declaration makes a valiant attempt at specifying accountability mechanisms and financial modalities, but it is important to recognise that this is the weakest element of the Declaration and must be strengthened. The Declaration lacks specific indicators throughout the priority actions and policy directions. This does, however, create an opportunity to bolster and strengthen accountability for implementation on country level. Transparency in the accountability process is strongly aided through indicators, commitments and

measurable results being tabled and debated on country level specifically within national Parliaments, which must be built upon. This gives parliamentarians, as well as diverse civil society representatives and the media, the core information to hold governments accountable to the commitments made in the Declaration.

Finally, it is also important that the increasing role of South-South cooperation has been recognized. However, this should not be seen as a substitute for North-South cooperation; the commitment of financing for development should not be transferred to South-South cooperation.

### Further advocacy resources

1. Asia Pacific Alliance for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (2012) Resource Flows for Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in Asia and the Pacific: Gaps and Opportunities. Available at: <http://www.asiapacificalliance.org/publications/apa-research-publications.html>