



Global Partners in Action:

**NGO Forum on Sexual and Reproductive Health
and Development**

Invest in Health, Rights and the Future

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**Parliamentarians working
for Sexual and Reproductive Health
and Rights**

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Introduction

The Cairo Programme of Action (PoA) makes explicit reference to the contribution that legislative bodies can make in monitoring and redefining political priorities and promoting the ICPD goals.

The Cairo PoA in particular, recommends the active participation of parliamentarians through their various roles:

- enacting appropriate legislation;
- allocating financial resources;
- ensuring accountability of expenditures;
- and raising public awareness of population issues.



Background

More laws and policies with a gender perspective are needed to achieve strong and equitable democracies. In the LAC region in particular, there is clear a need to mobilize the political will to advance and preserve the achievements already made in the area of reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

Parliamentarians through its various functions play a crucial role to promote good governance and a favourable political environment to exercise reproductive health and rights. The role parliamentarians play in strengthening the rule of law and transparency cannot be underestimated. As the voice of the people, parliamentarians ensure citizens' participation in and oversight of the development process.



Challenges and Constraints

- Many countries in the LAC region continue to have laws and policies that restrict reproductive health and rights and access to information and quality reproductive health services.
- It takes time and effort to effect change at the national level – particularly on issues that frequently are not considered as a top priority by many political actors.
- Fighting the opposition and conservative groups and their misinformation campaigns has been, and continues to be, the number one challenge for parliamentarians.
- Lack of adequate funding and budgeting for population and reproductive health programs continues to be a major restraint.



Parliamentary Networks

The formation of **national all-party parliamentary groups** in each country has been key to keeping social and development issues at the forefront of the policy-making process.

Through the **regional parliamentary networks like the IAPG (or GPI in Spanish)**, parliamentarians have established mechanisms for collaboration among parliamentarians at the national and regional level, and at the international level by working with the other parliamentary regional networks around the world.

National all-party groups provide a platform for dialogue on key issues, and have played an important role in mobilizing a network of committed individuals, generating partnerships and placing social and development issues on top of the legislative agenda.



Looking Forward

It is necessary to build a strong and effective partnership with parliamentarians and high-level decision-makers who can promote the adoption of new laws, monitor the effective implementation of the international commitments made by their governments, and improve governance through their oversight role by promoting transparency and accountability.

A tropical beach scene with turquoise water, white sand, and a blue sky with white clouds. The water is crystal clear, and the sand is bright white. The sky is a deep blue with scattered white clouds. The beach curves along the right side of the frame, with some greenery and rocks visible in the distance.

Thank you for your attention!

And I hope you visit the Dominican Republic!

Photo: Bahía de las Águilas