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Canadian Association of Parliamentarians
on Population and Development

Association canadienne des parlementaires
pour la population et le développement

CAPPD 2023 AGM: Meeting Minutes

Participants

Attendees:

- **Dr. Hedy Fry (MP) (LPC)**
- **Senator Marilou McPhedran (Non-Affiliated)**
- **MP Pam Damoff (LPC)**
- **MP Leah Gazan (NDP)**
- **MP Leah Taylor Roy (LPC)**
- **MP Lindsay Mathyssen (NDP)**
- **Senator Gigi Osler (Canadian Senators Group)**
- **MP Arielle Kayabaga (LPC)**

Special Presenter:

- **Cecilia Espinoza (IPAS)**

Representatives from the Secretariat (Action Canada for Sexual Health and Rights):

- **Kelly Bowden (Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Government Relations)**
- **Insiya Mankani (Public Affairs Officer)**
- **Shejuti Farook (Web and IT Coordinator)**

Welcome & Approval of the Agenda

Action Canada Director of Policy, Advocacy, and Government Relations, Kelly Bowden, welcomed attendees and provided introductory remarks about the work of Action Canada and its long history as the secretariat of CAPPD. Action Canada has been the CAPPD secretariat since 1997, with a goal of engaging politicians in SRHR in Canada and globally. Reproductive health and women's empowerment are intertwined, and sexual and reproductive rights are human rights. This work builds on the commitment made in Cairo in 1994 and more recently, in Nairobi, for ICPD25.

After quorum was reached, the meeting commenced. Kelly introduced Dr. Hedy Fry and Senator Marilou McPhedran, co-chairs of CAPPD. Kelly then invited Dr. Fry to say a few words.

Opening Remarks

Dr. Fry welcomes all members to the AGM. She highlighted Canada's recent historic commitments on SRHR both financially and politically in the midst of continued restrictions on access in neighbouring countries. Globally, sexual and reproductive health and rights are at the centre of a concerning rise in anti-rights and anti-democratic organizing. Opponents of SRHR have made concerted efforts to roll back rights at the local, national, and global levels. Canada has a role to play in countering these attacks on SRHR and democracy by being continuing to be a strong champion for SRHR. For that, we need to continue to strengthen our position in Canada and in global spaces particularly as we head towards ICPD30.

Senator McPhedran then stepped in to introduce the keynote speaker, Cecilia Espinoza, policy and advocacy lead at IPAS.

Keynote Speaker: Cecilia Espinoza

The multiple global intersecting crises and conflicts have jeopardized the progress made to advance sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), since the adoption of the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in 1994.

The 30th anniversary of the ICPD represents an opportunity to recognize the achievements and to address persisting challenges that hinder the full realization of the SRHR and the Sustainable Development Goals. Members of parliament around the world can help to advance the implementation of the ICPD program of action by ensuring that laws and policies contribute to advancing SRHR, holding governments accountable, mobilizing necessary resources, and creating public support and participation to address neglected issues.

It is important to connect the dots between important developments in the world in regard to sexual and reproductive rights, how central they are to political projects and how important it is that parliamentarians continue their important work in furthering the commitments Canada has made, first in Cairo and then in Nairobi.

Election of CAPPD Executive Committee (2023-2024)

The secretariat confirmed all eight (8) executive committee members would stand for re-election.

There is continuation of the practice established by Dr. Fry that the CAPPD is co- chaired by an MP and senator, with Dr. Fry and Senator McPhedran continuing to serve as co-chairs.

Chair

MP Dr. Hedy Fry (LPC)
Senator Marilou McPhedran (Non-affiliated)

Vice-Chairs

MP Elizabeth May (GPC) - in absentia
MP Lindsay Mathyssen (NDP)
MP Pam Damoff (LPC)

Directors

MP Leah Gazan (NDP)
MP Leah Taylor Roy (LPC)
MP Heather McPherson (NDP) – in absentia
Senator Mobina Jaffer (Independent) - in absentia
Senator Gigi Osler (Canadian Senators Group)

Insiya asked if there were any nominations from the floor. Seeing none, MP Gazan moved a motion to accept all candidates to the CAPPD Executive Committee. Motion was seconded by MP Taylor Roy. Motion approved.

Report from the Co-Chairs

Over the course of the year, members of the CAPPD attended three global conferences (Sexual Health Conference in Barbados, the International Aids Conference, and the International Conference on Family Planning) to represent the association and to meet with parliamentarians from across the world to share insights on SRHR needs issues globally.

The CAPPD also hosted a number of events throughout the year to bring more awareness to SRHR issues more broadly. In May 2022, the CAPPD held a parliamentary event in celebration of vaginas and vulvas and the importance of their inclusion and visibility in health research, politics, policy making, at the doctor's office, and beyond. The event was led by MP Pam Damoff and co-hosted by Senator McPhedran, MP Elizabeth May, and MP Leah Gazan.

Action Canada, UNFPA, and the CAPPD hosted the Canadian launch of UNFPA's State of the World Population (SWOP) Report 2022. The event unpacked the 2022 SWOP report - Seeing the Unseen: The case for action in the neglected crisis of unintended pregnancy. Panelists featured colleagues from Action Canada, UNFPA, Global Affairs Canada, the Canadian Advisory of Women Immigrants, and InterPares with opening remarks from Senator McPhedran on behalf of the CAPPD.

CAPPD hosted a parliamentary event in support of sexual health awareness week, an annual event designed to raise awareness on sexual and reproductive health and promote resources to improve community health in Canada. The event highlighted what policy makers can do to ensure people have the information they need to make informed and healthy sexual and

reproductive health choices. MP Leah Taylor Roy's office spearheaded the event on behalf of the CAPPD which featured a panel discussion on the work being done to ensure people in Canada and globally have access to accurate and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health information. The CAPPD was represented by MP Elizabeth May, MP Jenica Atwin, and Senator Gigi Osler who all acted as moderators on the panel, bringing out insights from the civil society panelists.

Additionally, Members of the CAPPD shared a number of statements in the house including around women's reproductive rights, international safe abortion day, contraceptive access, comprehensive sexuality education, and more. Together the CAPPD has raised issues in the house, brought attention to important issues and created more space to continue to further the overall agenda on women's rights and ensuring health and well being for all.

Opportunities for 2023

There are several opportunities ahead in 2023 for CAPPD members to engage in. The next upcoming event is a cocktail reception in celebration of Canada's continued commitment to SRHR hosted by the Family Planning Initiative and endorsed by the CAPPD. Following this event will be Women Deliver in July of 2023 where new member MP Arielle Kayabaga will represent the CAPPD. The Canadian UNFPA State of Population Report launch is also scheduled to be held in Fall/Winter 2023 which can highlight the links between climate change and sexual health.

Other opportunities include joint statements on topical issues of shared interest, briefings from global and domestic experts on topics of interest (e.g. SRHR needs in humanitarian settings, anti-rights movements in Canada and globally, trends on gender equality, SRHR within UN mechanisms and the ICPD + 30 agenda) and cross regional parliamentary delegations to global conferences. CAPPD Members will also have the opportunity to engage with different domestic and international parliamentary groups that are aligned with CAPPD interests and finding new avenues of collaboration.

Discussion

Parliamentarians took the opportunity to further discuss the rollbacks that have been observed within government and how it is the role of parliamentarians to monitor this shift both domestically and at global conferences.

Senator McPhedran also highlighted the uniqueness of the CAPPD in its partnership with Action Canada and the importance of engaging with civil society. Senator Osler echoed this and suggested building more partnerships with civil society through the coming year, particularly with physicians and medical professionals. It would be beneficial to engage in roundtables or

medical conferences with this mindset. MP Mathysen mentioned it would be important to include midwives when thinking through partnerships in this category as well.

MP Gazan and MP Taylor Roy discussed the need to build global connections and actively participate in global conferences to build bridges with other parliamentarians working to advance this agenda.

Closing Remarks Adjournment

Senator McPhedran congratulated the executive committee on their re-election and reiterated the many opportunities to drive forward the agenda of the CAPPD particularly as 2024 marks the 30th year of the ICPD.

Senator McPhedran moved a motion to adjourn.

AGM documents

Background documents, including the AGM agenda, CAPPD 2021 Annual Report, and the CAPPD constitution can be on the [CAPPD website](#) or by emailing secretariat@cappd.ca

