

JOICFP NEWS

Women in an Aging Society

Asian workshop examines greater implications of aging for women

"The effect of population aging on the well-being of women is one of the least researched areas," said Dr. Aline Wong, minister of state for health and education, Singapore. Speaking at the Workshop on Population Aging, Wong said, "Women are subjected to several vulnerabilities because of the social and economic positions they occupy." These include financial security, the prospect of widowhood and loneliness, and frailty and disability in old age, she said. "There is a lack of studies and data on the present situation and specific needs of elderly women," she said.

Taking the theme of "Women in an Aging Society," the workshop was held in Singapore from March 14 - 17. Part of the UNFPA-supported regional Promotion of Awareness and Policy Formulation on Aging (RAS/92/P13) project implemented by JOICFP, the workshop was jointly organized by the Department of Social Work and Psychology, National

University of Singapore, and JOICFP. A total of 40 experts and senior officers responsible for policy, research, planning and implementation of issues of aging from 12

countries took part in the workshop. A representative of ESCAP also joined the event.

The main aims of the workshop were to review problems and policy issues surrounding women in population aging in Asia and to exchange information, experiences and strategies among participating countries. The workshop also provided participants with a forum to discuss and make recommendations on the issue of women in an aging society for

use as background materials for the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), to be held in Cairo, Egypt, in September, and to guide to the formulation of policies and programs in Asia.

The event was opened with an address by Dr. S. Vasoo, head, Department of Social Work and Psychology, National University of Singapore. Dr. Toshio Kuroda, director emeritus, Nihon University Population Research Institute, who served as a resource person at the workshop, also provided a welcome address.

In a message to participants, Dr. Nafis Sadik, executive director, UNFPA, noted the increase in the proportion of elderly in both industrialized and developing countries. "In 1980, there were 381 million persons aged 60 and over, accounting for approximately 9% of the world's population," she said. "By the year 2020, the aged population will comprise 13% of the world's total population, and 69% of these older people will live in developing countries."

The workshop provided a positive forum for participants to discuss a range of issues concerned with the following themes: consequences and implications of population aging; family support for the elderly; economic security of women in old age; health and social service policies and provisions; and data requirements and research issues. Country papers were also presented at the workshop.

In recommendations, participants highlighted a number of issues important for public policies at the country level. In particular, they stressed that issues affecting older women need to be highlighted and voiced so that their concerns are given priority; awareness and understanding of aging issues need to be promoted through public education,



An elderly woman plants rice in Indonesia.

school curricula and the media; on-going national forums should be held to coordinate efforts on aging policies; and laws protecting the rights of the elderly need to be legislated.

At the regional level, participants emphasized greater cooperation and exchange of experiences for the development of new strategies in policy formulation and program planning, particularly those pertaining to women. They also urged the promotion of collaborative research efforts and exchanges to promote better understanding of the socio-economic characteristics and needs of elderly women to assist policy formulation.

The participants also recommended that international agencies should facilitate the implementation of programs and activities proposed at country and regional levels through funding support for research, training, awareness creation, information exchange and data collection.



Aline Wong

Fonda Speaks Out

Jane Fonda, goodwill ambassador, UNFPA, visited JOICFP as part of a mission from the Turner Foundation on March 30 to exchange information. She was accompanied by the foundation's director, Peter Bahouth. Below is an outline of comments she made on issues related to population, food, women and the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs).

It seems that it is essential to approach the



Jane Fonda

issue of population from two angles: from a woman's angle and from the "hard science" angle — which has to do with the carrying capacity of the earth and, most dramatically, the issue of food.

Perhaps nowhere can we see the limits of further technological advance on the increase of food as in Japan. Rice farmers here could become so rich if agricultural science could find a way of increasing the rice crop on the same amount of acreage. But for quite a number of years now this has not happened. This is important for people to realize because many people in the world are saying, "What's the problem. Science has always helped us in the past. There will be technological solutions in the future." Hopefully that will be true, but it is dangerous to base our development and population strategies on suppositions that may never happen. So the question of food is very important.

We just came from China. There is so much talk about the marvel of the socialist market economy and the expansion of industrialization in China. But the world's scientists say that there is a high probability that by the year 2000 — even given the one-child family — China will not have enough

grain to feed its people. The amount of grain that would be necessary for China to import could exceed what the rest of the world is capable of exporting. This is the kind of thing that causes war.

Added to that, the supply of water is diminishing, especially in the northern provinces of China. So, while some may abhor the coercive nature of China's "one-child" policy, (the fact remains that) they are facing a catastrophe that is very difficult for us especially in the U.S. to understand.

The problem is one of balancing the absolute limits of the carrying capacity of the earth alongside the need to protect human rights, particularly of women who bear the responsibility of birthing.

I will say, although we were there (in China) a very short time, I was very touched by the efforts of NGOs and feminist groups that we met dealing with this problem. Beginning particularly at the Earth Summit in Rio, the role of the women's movement and

international women's NGOs became very strong and played a very important role in changing governmental attitudes from the UN down to all the governments about how to deal with this problem.

Whether in India, China, the U.S. or Africa, what we are seeing is that coercion can only go so far. To really address the population issue, we need to raise the status of women; to educate women; to allow women to have economic independence so that they are in a position where they can negotiate with their husbands, and where they are in a position to see that their status does not just depend on the number of children they have.

The notion that women have a right to sexual pleasure, that women have a right to say no to a male advance, that there is such a thing as marital rape — these sorts of issues dealing with the psychology of a woman's sexual life are very, very important, and very empowering. So, we think that all of us need to understand more about the power, role and influence of these independent, feminist, very grassroots organizations; that these are the ones that can really make a difference together with the governmental support of family planning (FP). It needs to go hand in hand.

Improving MCH Care

Dr. Helen Wallace, professor, Maternal and Child Health (MCH), San Diego State University, visited JOICFP on March 25 while in Japan as a consultant to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to gather information on infant and maternal mortality. Below is an outline of comments she made during an interview with JOICFP NEWS.

I have had the opportunity to investigate the reasons for low infant mortality rates in Sweden and Finland, which are numbers two and three in the world in (terms of low) infant mortality after Japan.

Clearly, I think that Sweden and Finland have given high priority to the health and social care of women and children. They have made it possible for prenatal care and maternity care of very good quality to be available to practically all pregnant women, and to be available free of charge and at geographically convenient locations.

They have also placed an emphasis on an improved diet during pregnancy and provided opportunities for safe delivery for all pregnant women in their countries.

Both Sweden and Finland have emphasized the role and status of women in their societies. They have made it possible for a woman to take time off work for her pregnancy and be able to resume her job after delivery or even after the baby's first year. This is a major social step forward in the history of women in the world.

The U.S. has an unenviable record of having the highest incidence of teenage pregnancy of any industrial country of the world. This is related to the fact that we do not have universal family life education or sex education. Sweden and Finland do.



Helen Wallace

Innovative Community Approaches in Mexico

A visit to areas in Veracruz State and Mexico City in Mexico where the Integrated Project (IP) is being implemented provided a JOICFP mission with an opportunity to monitor project activities and provide practical advice to staff on ways to improve implementation. The mission, which was in Mexico from February 17 - 26, included a public health expert, Dr. Kyoko Ishige, director, Nihonmatsu Public Health Center, Fukushima Prefecture.

The field observation in the rural areas offered insights into the effectiveness of the system of rural health promoters launched by the Mexican Foundation for Family Planning (MEXFAM), the implementing agency of the project. In particular, the JOICFP mission was impressed with the success that the system has achieved in less than two years since it was established. Meanwhile, in the urban slum areas of Mexico City the team observed another aspect of MEXFAM's activities, the community doctor system. Aimed at bringing doctors to

villages without healthcare facilities, the community doctor system assists doctors to set up practices in these communities and encourages them to become self-reliant by charging fees.

MEXFAM's efforts to improve the quality of life at the grassroots have been boosted by the provision of primary health care kits for health promoters with funds donated through the Voluntary Deposit for International Aid (VDIA) scheme, which is administered by the Japanese Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications. Reconditioned bicycles from Japan donated through the Municipal Coordinating Committee for Overseas Bicycle Assistance (MCCOBA) have also helped mobilize health promoters.

Another aspect of MEXFAM's work viewed by the team was its innovative approach to adolescent health education. One of the



Parents listen to an adolescent health lecture in Mexico City.

activities observed by the mission was the sex education and contraceptive education services the foundation provides adolescents, teachers and parents. First, a different approach is used for each group, and then the groups are integrated to bridge communication gaps. In comments made at the end of the visit, Ishige said that Japan had much to learn from MEXFAM's practical approach to the issue of adolescent health education.

TBAs – Agents of Change in Guatemala

The use of traditional birth attendants (TBAs) to promote family planning (FP), maternal and child health (MCH) and preventive health care services has proved an effective approach to winning the acceptance of the Mayan people living in areas of Guatemala surrounding Lake Atitlán in Sololá State where the Integrated Project (IP) is being promoted. The project, implemented by the Family Planning Association of Guatemala (APROFAM), has made inroads into the closed Mayan communities where previous programs have been unable by recruiting and training the respected TBAs to serve as a link between the people and the official healthcare system.

A JOICFP monitoring mission to the IP areas from February 7 - 15 found that the role of the TBAs in the project has been reinforced by the distribution of MCH handbooks, which

were produced with funds donated through the Voluntary Deposit for International Aid (VDIA) scheme administered by the Japanese Ministry of Posts and Telecommunications.

Under the project, two versions of the MCH handbook have been produced: an educational picture book for TBAs to use as a source of correct information for illiterate women on various issues such as FP, MCH and PHC, and a booklet for mothers to carry to record health data about themselves and their child. To ensure the effective use of these materials, APROFAM has been providing training to TBAs as well as public health center personnel who already understand the importance of the handbook and collaborate to record data on women and children transferred to health centers by TBAs.

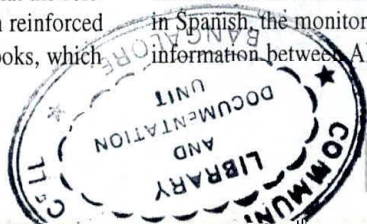
Serving a population of about 120,000 people around Lake Atitlán, more than 50 TBAs are supervised by three TBA monitors. Literate and able to communicate in Spanish, the monitors convey information between APROFAM

and the TBAs, organize meetings and pay monthly visits on TBAs. The monitors are in charge of MCH handbook distribution.

The handbooks are also serving as a source of statistics which can be used to improve services and prevent health problems. Previously, there was no reliable means to collect such information as infant and maternal mortality. A unique MCH data collection system utilizing illustrated cards is also currently being developed.



TBAs contribute to the creation of data collection materials.



New Life for Women in Bangladesh



Women assembled at a family development center exchange experiences openly.

Something very unique is happening among the women in Dholia Union, Feni District, and Ghorashal Union, Narsingdi District, of Bangladesh. For the first time in their lives, they are able to leave their homes and meet together to discuss ways to improve the way of life in the community. Behind this transformation taking place in these rural communities is the Integrated Family



Family development volunteers show MCH information to rural women in Feni District.

Development Project. Implemented by the Family Planning Association of Bangladesh (FPAB) in cooperation with JOICFP, the project is part of the four-year, UNFPA-supported regional Sustainable Community-based Family Planning/Maternal and Child Health (FP/MCH) Project with Special Focus on Women.

During a monitoring visit to pilot project areas in Dholia Union April 3, a JOICFP mission was struck by the remarkable changes taking place in communities where women are traditionally considered of little value and

suffer the most in terms of low status and poor education and healthcare. According to studies, most women are aware of the negative impact that bearing many children has on the health and welfare of themselves and their offspring and do not want to have many children. Unfortunately, the choice of childbirth is rarely left up to them.

However, the launch of the project is beginning to change the attitudes towards women in the

pilot villages as women find strength in numbers and learn that they are able to make changes in their lives. The key to the new strength of the women is the tiered administrative structure of the project which includes men in an advisory committee — and thus gains their support and endorsement of activities — but leaves all decision-making up to women who make up the steering committee, the driving force of the project.

At the bottom of the project structure in each area are the 24 family development volunteers (FDVs) who organize a group of community women in their own working area. Each of these groups has a family development center, which is used to bring women together for the provision of education on FP/MCH, nutrition, primary health care and environmental sanitation. The centers are also being utilized in some areas for income-generating activities and literacy classes for women. In the near future, FPAB is also planning to introduce a credit program for women and provide skill-development training to establish income-generation projects.

Prior to the project's inception, the concept of joining hands to change their lives was unthinkable for most of the women. In comments made to the mission, an elderly woman of a village in Dholia Union said, "When I was young, we could never have dreamed that women could form teams and work together like this." But as the project gathers steam, more women are realizing the possibilities for improving their situation and are turning to their neighbors for support and strength to make a better way of life a reality.

On the Road to Self-reliance

The Taicang IP Center began providing mass primary healthcare services on a fee-charged basis this April following an intensive training seminar, held March 21 - April 3. Utilizing mass parasite control (PC) activities to generate funds to develop better healthcare services, the center's staff are planning to examine 50,000 school students from Taicang City this year in cooperation with city's education and health departments.

The concept of promoting organizational self-reliance through mass PC activities was learned from Japan. The center is planning to expand its fee-charging system and improve the quality of such services as family planning (FP) and maternal and child health (MCH) activities, as well as services for the aged.

Taicang City was an original site of the Integrated Project (IP), which has helped raise the level of health. The *Ascaris* infection rate, for example, has dropped from 62% in 1984 to 16% in 1992, according to sampling surveys.

During the seminar, participants conducted 723 stool examinations on students of four schools and found infection rates varied between 19% and 52%. The examinations were provided to students for a fee of 2 yuan (23 cents at an exchange rate of 8.7 yuan to US\$1) and only those found positive were treated.

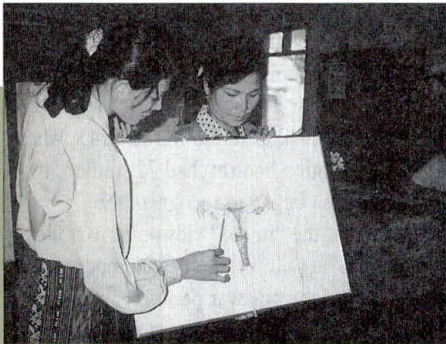
A four-member team of Japanese experts led by Noriji Suzuki, professor emeritus, Kochi Medical College, took part in the seminar and played an active role by providing guidance on how to gather and examine stools, collect and analyze data and feed back results to each school. At one of the schools, the experts assisted staff to explain results and provide information on healthcare and environmental sanitation to the students and families.



Microscopes are used to assist with health education in a Taicang school.

Answering Unmet FP Needs in Laos

Three district workshops held in Laos in mid-March helped smooth the way at the local level for the implementation of the UNFPA-supported regional Sustainable Community-based Family Planning/Maternal and Child Health (FP/MCH) Project with Special Focus



An IMCH staff member teaches about female anatomy in Paksane.

on Women. Held in Naxaithong District in Vientiane Municipality, and Paksane and Taphabat districts of Bolikhamsay Province, the workshops were aimed at disseminating the IP concept at the local level and developing one-year work plans tailored to reflect local needs.

While local in their orientation, the workshops were attended by project personnel from all levels. Village representatives included village chiefs, members of the Lao Women's Union (LWU) and health volunteers, who were joined by representatives of the district steering committee, health and MCH officials and project officers of the National Institute for

Mother and Child Health (IMCH). These workshops followed the national-level orientation workshop, which was held in Vientiane in December for central- and provincial-level steering committee members.

The project, aimed at improving health and raising the status of women through the promotion of birth spacing and provision of MCH services, is being implemented by the IMCH. A relatively new concept in Laos, birth spacing was officially recognized as recently as 1988. While awareness of birth spacing remains low, research indicates that women generally would like to stop at four children. In reality, however, the total fertility rate is 6.7. Among the many hilltribes of Laos, the average number of children per woman can be as high as eight. Meanwhile, among those with knowledge of FP, the demand for contraceptives is high. Most of these needs remain unmet especially in the rural areas, however, due to the complete lack of supplies in health facilities. The high maternal and infant mortality rates of Laos reflect the serious need for quality services.

The lack of correct information about the mechanisms of human reproduction and contraception was made apparent during the workshops, which provided some participants with their first chance to see and handle contraceptives. The contraceptives were introduced to the village-level staff and volunteers on the first day of the workshops by personnel who received training in Thailand through the Ministry of Public Health.

The participants were also given an

overview of the demographic situation of each district by the chief of health of the district and were provided with insights into the results of the baseline survey by IMCH staff. The JOICFP mission present at the workshop explained the outreach healthcare system that is planned to be established under the project. The role of the traditional birth attendants and health volunteers in MCH activities was explained by IMCH staff, while an outline of the



An MCH officer explains contraceptive methods in Naxaithong.

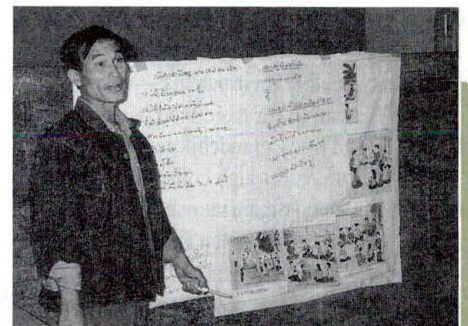
role of the LWU was provided by the representative of each district.

On the second day, participants were divided into groups for discussions on the work plans for each district. Priority areas outlined in the plans included IEC campaigns on birth spacing and MCH, the recruiting and training of health volunteers and the establishment of an outreach service system utilizing mobile teams. The issue of charging nominal fees for contraceptives and essential drugs was noted as important to promoting the sustainability of the project. Participants also expressed their wish to set up income-generation projects for women, but agreed on the need to ensure quality control and secure a market for products before embarking on such activities. The low rates of immunization, lack of hygienic latrines and safe drinking water and the urgent need for childcare services to support working women were also noted as problem areas.

Eight villages in two districts and four villages in one district have now been selected as project areas. Medical equipment, drugs and contraceptives for the project were expected to reach the areas in early May. In concluding, the JOICFP mission urged the health staff and volunteers to reach out to the community, so that mothers who want four children would only need to have four deliveries.



Participants discuss their workplan in Naxaithong.



A village head summarizes the problems affecting his village in Taphabat.

Women Call for Policy Change

Keiko Higuchi, professor, Tokyo Kasei University, and a prominent figure in fields such as women's issues, population aging and education, spoke at a Council on Population-Education study meeting, held at JOICFP on April 8. About 40 population experts, journalists and academics attended the meeting to listen to Higuchi, who spoke as representative of the "Japan's Network for Women and Health, Cairo '94."

Higuchi began her talk with an overview of the feminist movement in Japan surrounding the Eugenic Protection Law, describing the struggles with pro-life groups and the reproductive health and rights movement launched to counteract the government's recent pronatalist stance. "Women's sexuality has always been embedded in the population issue in Japan," she contended. She also argued that there is a large information gap between the government and the people especially women, and sometimes the complete lack of women's voices in policy issues goes unnoticed.



Keiko Higuchi

Speaking on the aging society, Higuchi stated that the government policies regarding aging have mostly been policies with which to counteract the rapid decrease in birthrate. The poor quality of life of the people, particularly the long work hours and commuting times which prevent couples from spending time together, may in fact be the reason for fewer births, she said. She noted that the burden on the family to take care of the elderly may also be a reason. Recently in Japan, she said, some women in their 60s die before their parents — due to overwork in caring for their aged parents, husbands, and often grandchildren.

"In the future, through collaboration with non-governmental organizations such as the Japan's Network for Women and Health, there should be more government policies made with women and not just those made for women," she said. She added that men's knowledge of women's health should be heightened since women are the ones who bear children.

Taking a Micro View of Population

Importance of considering needs of individual in population policy stressed at study meeting

Yoichi Okazaki, professor, Department of Law, Nihon University, emphasized the importance of reflecting the desires of people in population policy during a lecture at a Council on Population Education study meeting, held at JOICFP on March 14. His lecture, titled "Population Problems of Japan from Macro and Micro Viewpoints," was heard by some 40 experts drawn from such fields as economics, health, sociology and demography, as well as representatives of the mass media.

To illustrate the importance of considering the needs of the individual in population policy, Okazaki began his presentation by providing historical background to Japan's population and social and economic policies. In 1872, Japan had 35 million people and was geared toward industrialization under the government of the Meiji period, he said. By 1912, the population had expanded to 50 million and was helping to drive the country's development, he said.

However, Okazaki said, the government began to worry about population growth during the 1920s. By the time the Great Depression began in 1929, the population had hit 63 million and an imbalance between population and resources in Japan was identified as "dangerous" by a leading U.S. demographer, he said. Concerns about this imbalance were behind Japan's aggression during the war, he



Yoichi Okazaki

said. During this time, Okazaki said, the pronatalist government set a target population of 100 million by 1960.

It was not until after the war in 1945, when Japan's population had reached 72 million, that the government began to recognize the importance of the "micro" viewpoint in policy formulation, he said. In the new democratic atmosphere of the postwar period, values began to change and the need to look at people's welfare and health became a priority for the government, he said. Faced with as baby boom and grim economic conditions, the government gave its support to the family planning movement, he said.

Okazaki said that the drop in the birthrate during the 1950s was not decided by the government, but by individual couples. In the 1960s and 1970s, population growth slowed, Japan's economy flourished and the standard of living improved for the people, he said.

Today, as Japan faces an aging society, the government is studying ways to increase the total fertility rate of 1.5, he said. However, for population policy to be successful, the government must first establish trust with the people, he argued. To achieve this, the micro viewpoint of the individual must be considered, he concluded.

Japan's Population Growth Hits Record Low

Japan's annual population growth slowed in 1993 from the previous year to the lowest rate since WWII to hit 0.25%, according to a report by the governmental Management and Coordination Agency. The previous lowest rate was 0.33% in 1992, the report said.

Meanwhile, the total population expanded to reach an estimated 124.76 million as of October 1, 1993, for an increase of 310,000 over 1992, the agency reported.

Within the population, the number of people aged 65 years and over increased by 660,000 to hit a record 16.91 million (13.5%), while the number of children under 15 years decreased by 520,000 to hit 20.84 million, it stated. The 16.7% proportion of children in the population was down from the 1992 figure of 17.2% and is the lowest on record, according to the agency.

Oiling the Wheels of Development

Reconditioned bicycles donated by the Municipal Coordinating Committee for Overseas Bicycle Assistance (MCCOBA) helped gear up family planning (FP), maternal and child health (MCH), preventive health care and community development activities in a growing number of developing countries in 1993. A total of 14 countries received 2,475 the bicycles in fiscal 1993 (April 1, 1993 -



Community-based distributors in Tanzania ride bicycles donated by MCCOBA in Japan.

March 31, 1994), through the efforts of MCCOBA's 15 members, which include 14 local Japanese governments and JOICFP. Aimed at providing assistance directly to the grassroots, the bicycles were sent to countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

At MCCOBA's 18th quarterly meeting, held at JOICFP on March 28, the association welcomed Shibuya City of Tokyo as a new member to bring the total membership to 16. In discussions about targets for activities in fiscal 1994, the members agreed on a goal of 3,225 as the minimum number of bicycles to be shipped to at least 22 countries. In providing these targets, the members noted that over 4,000 bicycles could be donated abroad if there were sufficient funds to cover shipping costs, which pose the major hurdle to the scheme's expansion.

However, participants at the meeting welcomed an announcement that the Japan Bicycle Promotion Institute has pledged a total of ¥20 million (US\$189,000 at an exchange rate

of US\$1 to ¥106) to assist with shipping costs of the bicycles.

Another issue discussed at the meeting was the enactment of the new National and Local Property Transfer Law in 1993, which obliges governments to donate public property to assist developing countries through non-governmental organizations in Japan. Noting the potential of this law, the MCCOBA members agreed to

submit to JOICFP items such as medical and office equipment for shipment to developing countries together with bicycles in containers.

Toshima City, one of the pioneering members of MCCOBA, also announced at the meeting that it will produce at least 20,000 notebooks of recycled paper to be sent abroad with bicycles in 1994. The city donated 20,000 such notebooks in 1993 to support literacy promotion and record keeping by community-based distributors and public health nurses in developing countries.

Since the scheme was launched in 1988, a total of 9,500 reconditioned bicycles have been sent abroad to 24 countries through MCCOBA (as

of the end of March 1994). The scope of the scheme continues to expand with bicycles being donated to support the work of large organizations such as UNFPA and IPPF, and local family planning associations. Over 90% of the bicycles to be sent abroad in 1994 will be sent through JOICFP channels.

As the scheme develops, it is hoped that exchanges among local governments in Japan and in developing countries will expand to include the transfer of commodities and other forms

of assistance including experience sharing.

Gov't & NGOs Cooperate on Population/AIDS

The unique role that non-governmental organizations (NGOs) play in the international assistance field was emphasized at a Tokyo meeting organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) on March 24. The meeting, called to introduce NGOs to "Japan's Global Issues Initiative on Population and AIDS," was attended by 30 representatives of 10 leading Japanese NGOs involved internationally in such fields as population, family planning, AIDS prevention, women, health and the environment.

Providing an outline of the initiative, Norio Hattori, deputy director general, Bureau of Economic Cooperation, MOFA, said that the government's allocation of US\$3

billion in official development assistance to population and AIDS-prevention activities is expected to effect positive cooperation with developing countries. Commenting that NGO activities are effective for improving the welfare of people, Hattori said that the government will endeavor to link up with NGOs under this new initiative.

In response, NGO representatives made a strong request that the government consider the needs of the people at the grassroots in implementing any activities under the initiative.



Norio Hattori (right)

Fujikazu Horigome, managing director, Social Welfare Foundation, Mainichi Shimbun (left), presents a donation check to Yasuo Kon, deputy executive director, JOICFP, on March 16. The sum of ¥400,000 (US\$3,800 at an exchange rate of ¥106 to US\$1) was donated by the foundation to support the costs of



shipping reconditioned bicycles donated by the Municipal Coordinating Committee for Overseas Bicycle Assistance (MCCOBA) to developing countries where JOICFP's Integrated Project (IP) is being promoted.

VOICE OF VOICES

By Chojiro Kunii

Looking at China from Japan

Japan has long had a reputation as a country with too large a population. Indeed, an awareness of the size of the country's population and its limited resources drove Japan in the past to engage in many conflicts. The country's military aggression finally ended with its defeat in WWII 50 years ago. Since then, Japan has undergone considerable reconstruction to emerge the nation it is today.

However, in the years since the war, Japan has still had to face the population issue and find constructive ways to deal with the

problem. Many countries are today facing the same situation as Japan did during its period of reconstruction. These include the former Soviet Republics and Eastern European countries and the rapidly industrializing countries of Asia.

China is also facing a serious population problem and it is one that deserves special mention. The new path that the country is taking is being carefully observed by other countries. Its "one-child family" policy is an unparalleled approach and, as such, is very controversial and subject to debate.

As a Japanese, I am acutely aware of the ill effects of overpopulation. Therefore, I feel that Japan should look toward China to see if there are lessons to be learned for the future.

Population is not an issue that can be

confined within national borders. Japan's past conduct clearly illustrates this. China is now facing a major problem, which also has negative implications for the rest of the world. Aware of the magnitude of its problem, China has set out on its own course of action. Aimed at ensuring the country's survival, the course of action embodies Chinese tradition and philosophy, which are not well understood in the West. However, what should be understood is that China is not just trying to decrease its population, but it is also trying to develop and improve the quality of life, just like Japan did in the postwar years.

The Japanese people joined hands to reconstruct Japan after the war in order to create a better way of life. These efforts spread throughout the country and became the foundation of its development. The immense efforts now being made by the people in China will certainly have a major influence on the world within the next 30 years.

DIARY

– Dr. **Nafis Sadik**, executive director; Dr. **Hirofumi Ando**, deputy executive director; **Jyoti Shankar Singh**, director, Technical and Evaluation Division; and **Kyoichi Nakamura**, information advisor, Information and External Relations Division, UNFPA, were in Japan to attend the Meeting of Eminent Persons on Population and Development, held in Tokyo on Jan. 26 and 27. While in Japan, Sadik also met with Japanese parliamentarians, representatives of NGOs and women's organizations.

– Dr. **Fred Sai**, president, IPPF, was in Japan to attend the Meeting of Eminent Persons on Population and Development, held in Tokyo on Jan. 26 and 27, and to meet with officials of the Japanese Parliamentarians Federation for Population (JPFP).

– **Oscar Moret**, director of finance, IPPF, visited JOICFP to discuss finance issues, while in Japan from Feb. 14 - 18.

– Nine participants from nine countries attended the Seminar on Parasite Control Administration for Senior Officers, held in Tokyo Jan. 31 - Feb 18. The seminar was implemented by JAPC and sponsored by JICA in cooperation with JOICFP.

– JOICFP staff member Tetsuo Kato was in

Guatemala from Feb. 7 - 15 to monitor the IP and VDIA-related activities. He later joined JOICFP Program Officer Ryoichi Suzuki to attend the Seminar on the Behavior of Young People in the Dominican Republic, held in Santo Domingo on Feb. 17 and 18. They were in Mexico from Feb. 20 - 26 where they joined Dr. **Kyoko Ishige**, director, Nihonmatsu Public Health Center, Fukushima Prefecture, to tour IP areas.

– While in the U.S. from Feb. 21 - 27, JOICFP Program Officer Hideyuki Takahashi exchanged information with UNFPA officials in New York and took part in the Professional Development Day of the 1994 Cooperating Agencies' Meeting organized by USAID, held in Washington D. C. on Feb. 25.

– A three-member mission headed by **William S. Reese**, president, PARTNERS of the Americas, visited JOICFP on Feb. 28 to exchange information, accompanied by **Annette Clear**, senior program officer, The Asia Foundation Tokyo Office.

– Three fifth-year medical students of Thailand's Chiang Mai University visited JOICFP on Mar. 1 for a one-day seminar on FP and JOICFP activities.

Corrections

The nominated countries listed in the announcement of the International Seminar on Family Planning Administration for Senior Officers II (Aug. 2 - 28, 1994) that appeared in JOICFP NEWS (No. 238, April 1994) was incorrect. The list should have been as follows: Bangladesh, Brazil, Dominican Republic, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Lao P.D.R., Malawi, Mexico, Philippines, Tanzania, Thailand, Uganda and Zambia. On page 8 of the same issue, the name of Fumiko Mukaigawara appeared incorrectly as Fumiko Mukaigawa. We regret these errors.

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