

The Regional Training Programme for the staff of Parliament and Parliamentarian Group on the "Development of Culturally Sensitive Programme"

The Secretariat of the House of Representatives of Thailand nominated staff to participate in the Regional Training Programme for the staff of Parliament and Parliamentarian Group on the "*Development of Culturally Sensitive Programme*" held by the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD), sponsored by UNFPA and UNESCO, in Chiang Mai, Thailand from 9 to 13 July 2007. Forty participants from public and private sectors working with parliamentarians on population and development from seventeen countries joined the event. The training included theories and successful experiences on culturally - linked frameworks and relevant standard setting instruments, significance of culture, gender and human rights, cultural diversity concept of the UNESCO, cultural lens of the UNFPA, gender and reproductive health issues, HIV/AIDS matters. Besides the discussion, participants had an opportunity to join a field trip to project sites including UNFPA AIDS & ageing project at Wat Saket, Radio Thailand Chiang Mai and community of local ethnic minority people. In the last session, participants were encouraged to adapt the newly learnt concepts to their context and work in supporting parliamentarians' work.

Benefits that participants get from the training include :

1. Understanding culturally - linked frameworks

and relevant standard-setting instruments, the importance and interrelation of culture, gender, human rights and development,

2. Mainstreaming of cultural analysis in programmes and application of cultural lenses,

3. Getting acquaintance with staff from public and private sectors of other Asian countries for future cooperation and networking on these issues,

4. Exchanging relevant information on the Thai Parliament and opinion on providing culturally sensitive programmes, and letting other participants knowing better the operations of the Thai Parliament in these matters.

Observations and recommendations are as follows:

1. The matters on culture, gender and human rights are very significant in providing programmes on development for people and parliamentarians responsible for advocacy of their people. In this regard, in the orientation of parliamentarians, these issues should be addressed in order to keep them aware of the importance of empowering women, improving of minority's status and cultural diversity for peaceful coexistence.

2. Parliamentarians and relevant parliamentary committees including the Committee on Public Health should be informed of the report so that they realize the significance of developing culturally sensitive programmes. Also, the report should be publicized on the website of the Thai Parliament.

3. At the present, agencies of the United Nations are focusing on providing relevant programmes in local community in Thailand. In this respect, parliamentarians should pay more attention to contact these agencies to get involve in providing essential programmes in their constituencies.

4. The agency responsible for the communication with the the Asian Forum of Parliamentarians on Population and Development (AFPPD) should follow up the works of parliamentarians who join the conferences of the AFPPD in order to keep the Forum informed of the implementation of the Thai Parliament in regard to the issues of population and development and other relevant activities performed by Thai parliamentarians.

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