Thematic discussion on achievements, challenges, gaps and emerging issues in the implementation of the Asian and Pacific Ministerial Declaration on Population and Development, as well as the PoA of the ICPD

Round table title: **Health, including sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights**

**Moderator:** Ms. Fingani A. Mphande-Nyasulu, Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine, King Mongkut’s Institute of Technology Ladkrabang, Thailand

**Panellists:**
- Ms. Shireen Jejeebhoy, Visiting Distinguished Faculty, International Institute for Population Sciences (IIPS), India
- Dr. Asela Gunawardena, Director General of Health Services, Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka
- Mr. Paul Ong, Chief Strategy Officer, Tsao Foundation, Singapore
- Ms. Sivananthi Thanenthiran, Executive Director, Asian-Pacific Resource and Research Centre for Women (ARROW), Malaysia

Open discussion with member States and other participants

**Talking points – DRAFT (Time – 03 minutes)**
- Earlier this year, in April 2023, UN projections suggested that India surpassed China to become the world’s most populous country. It is commendable that India attained replacement-level fertility without resorting to coercive practices.

- PFI has increasingly emerged as a leading voice and thought leader in shaping the global discourse on population dynamics, particularly following India's surpassing of China as the world’s most populous nation in April 2023. PFI has been reached by over 200 domestic and international electronic, print, and television media organizations.

- India is home to a young population of 379 million aged between 10 and 24 years. We need to make strategic investments in their health and well-being, including their SRHR and skilling for jobs. Addressing regressive social norms, such as child marriage and gender-based violence, can help promote gender equality and harness the potential of India’s “gender dividend”.

- Population Foundation of India, in partnership with United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), India, organized a National CSO Consultation on Population and Development on 31st of October, 2023 in New Delhi. The event saw 36 national-level Civil Society Organisations, working across the eleven thematic priorities, convene to deliberate the status of the indicators across policies and programmes in India. The CSOs were represented by highly respected and experienced development professionals. Dr. Shireen Jejeebhoy, the esteemed panalist in this session also participated in the consultation.

**Key Recommendations**
- Leveraging technology to enhance the reach and efficiency of SRH and AH programmes, particularly in remote and underserved areas.
- Mainstreaming SRH in the media to reduce stigma and raise awareness.
- Decentralising SRH and AH programmes by empowering state and district-level authorities.
- Promoting citizen engagement, accountability, and capacity building of Self-Help Groups (SHGs), women Panchayati Raj Institution (PRI) leaders, and young people.
Integrating Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for in-school and out-of school adolescents. CSE terminology should be culturally sensitive and inclusive.

Strategic engagement with policymakers on SRH and AH initiatives.

Adequate budget allocation for SRH and AH programs

A life-cycle approach to SRH, which a focus on interlinkages with empowerment, education, and gender equality.

Strengthening the capacity of CSOs and donors to invest in SRH