



## **MPs from across Europe and Africa visit Ghana and Ivory Coast to examine health systems and SRHR**

Accra and Abidjan, 15 August 2014 – A parliamentary delegation has today concluded a week long study tour to Ghana and Ivory Coast to learn about the health service and sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) in the West African countries. The delegation contained five members of parliament from across Europe (Albania, Austria, Ireland, Lithuania, Romania) and two from Africa (Kenya and Cameroon), all of whom are active on population and development issues in their home countries.

This study tour has allowed the MPs to see first-hand some of the greatest challenges facing Ghana and Ivory Coast in their development and in protecting the health and wellbeing of their citizens. These challenges include: maternal mortality, teenage pregnancy, sexually transmitted infections - including HIV. They also visited a number of innovative projects, in both urban and rural settings, aimed at proposing ways to address these problems, which are often rooted in cultural norms, gender inequality and lack of information.

Throughout the six day visit the group met various stakeholders from the field of population and development, including: national health service representatives, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), development partners, as well as representatives from civil society organisations. In both countries the parliamentarians met local MPs, many of whom had attended the Sixth International Parliamentarians' Conference on the Implementation of the ICPD Programme of Action (IPCI) last April in Stockholm. MPs also visited a public health clinic and community-based initiatives providing family planning information and services.

The MPs have committed to sharing their observations from the visit with their home parliaments and governments with the aim of generating increased development aid contributions and support for population and development issues at the international level.

The trip was organised by the European Parliamentary Forum on Population and Development (on behalf of the Action for Global Health consortium), and was hosted by the Planned Parenthood Association of Ghana (PPAG) and Association Ivoirienne pour le Bien-Etre Familial (AIBEF), both members of the International Planned Parenthood Federation African Region (IPPF AR) member organisation.

The participating MPs are:

- Hon. Valentina Leskaj, Member of Parliament from Albania
- Hon. Petra Bayr, Member of Parliament from Austria
- Hon. Marie Rose Nguini Effa, Member of Parliament from Cameroon.
- Hon. Helen McEntee, Member of Parliament from Ireland
- Hon. Andrew Toboso, Member of Parliament from Kenya
- Hon. Giedrė Purvaneckienė, Member of Parliament from Lithuania
- Hon. Florian-Dorel Bodog, Member of Parliament from Romania