

**APPG on
POPULATION,
DEVELOPMENT &
REPRODUCTIVE
HEALTH**



**ALL-PARTY PARLIAMENTARY
GROUP ON AIDS**



Sophia

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APPG on PD&RH, APPG on AIDS and Sophia Forum Event
Health and Safety: Gender Based Violence, Women and HIV in 2009

Good evening ladies and gentlemen.

My name is Christine McCafferty MP and I am the Chair of the UK All-Party Parliamentary Group on Population, Development and Reproductive Health.

I am delighted to welcome you all, here, this evening, to the joint event, organised by the APPG on Population, Development and Reproductive Health, the APPG on AIDS and the Sophia Forum, entitled Health and Safety: Gender Based Violence, Women and HIV.

The UK APPG on PD&RH was established in 1979, with the aim of encouraging initiatives to increase access to and improve sexual and reproductive health and rights services worldwide.

Earlier this year the Group published a Hearings Report on Maternal Morbidity, copies of which are available here, highlighting the 10-20 million women annually who suffer illnesses and injuries related to pregnancy and childbirth.

Today is the International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women and also marks the first day of 16 Days of Activism Against Gender Violence Campaign.

The last of the 16 days, appropriately enough, will be on December 10th which is International Human Rights Day and the campaign is keen to link violence against women with human rights, emphasising that such violence, is of course, a violation of human rights.

The 16-day period will also highlight other significant dates, including November 29th, International Women Human Rights Defenders Day and World AIDS Day on December 1st.

This evening we will hear about and discuss gender violence and HIV amongst women in the UK and internationally. I am delighted that women living with HIV and women who are *survivors* of gender violence - of all

backgrounds - are here in the audience with us this evening, and also form a central part of Sophia.

We are all focussed on meeting the MDGs by 2015, but the MDGs showing the least progress are the health MDGs. I believe that comprehensive access to sexual and reproductive health services, as outlined in MDG5B, is essential, if we are to achieve the MDGs.

However, we also need to be aware that we cannot attempt to reduce maternal and infant mortality without also reducing the huge levels of institutional violence against women who test positive for HIV in many antenatal settings.

Tonight we have assembled a panel of experts on HIV, health and gender violence to discuss these important issues.

It is my pleasure to introduce as tonight's Chair Kylie Morris, a former foreign correspondent who has been most recently seen as the presenter of More4 News. Kylie has spent years covering conflict and recovery in the developing world; always seeking to represent the lesser-heard voices of women which are rarely broadcast.