

Board of Trustees
17-18 November 2020

**Refers to
agenda item 2**

Agenda Item: Chair/DG Report to Board of Trustees

This has been a year of so much pain, hardship, chaos and loss that it is hard to comprehend. The Covid19 crisis has exposed and amplified problems while putting a spotlight on innumerable forms of inequality. The colossal bill for dealing with the virus and the loss of economic activity will produce a lot of hardship, with the burden falling often on the most vulnerable.

Covid19 hit just as we were returning from a transformational General Assembly in Delhi. Our frontline volunteers and MA colleagues had already given so much, yet this became a further catalyst to provide the necessary urgency for change. By the end of this Board meeting IPPF will have:

1. Completed its global and regional governance reform, with new byelaws and regulations. This includes a competency based, diverse new Board of Trustees and Board Committees in place. As a result, more agile, transparent and professional decision-making bodies, that are less susceptible to conflict of interest and abuse of power.
2. Approved a new model to allocate core income, overhauling our current one, untouched since 1997. As a result, resource allocation will better follow needs, be more transparent and predictable, while allowing space to accelerate strategic priorities and quickly respond to SRHR needs in humanitarian crisis.
3. Created a unified and re-structured Secretariat. We have been able to find efficiencies, reduce costs, make more of our core resources available to MA's and clarify accountability.
4. Approved a first ever comprehensive budget, for restricted and unrestricted across the Secretariat. This a key step towards creating conditions for better governance oversight, operational prioritisation, and risk management.
5. We have put in place a suite of safeguarding policies and incident management systems (SafeReport) and are responding more decisively to reported incidents and looking to tackle the power dynamics that make them possible.

Sustaining morale and wellbeing among Secretariat staff at times of such external and internal change has been challenging. We have a deep appreciation for the remarkable commitment colleagues have sustained and feel better prepared to support MAs who would have been impacted harder had these changes not taken place. Of course, the exit of the Western Hemisphere Region (WHR), was a shock; but the loyalty shown by those remaining and the opportunity to shape a new future in the region, has kept colleagues in good spirits.

The reforms, and even the exit of the WHR have not swayed donor support and we remain in a remarkably strong funding position. However, our sector faced additional challenges since we last met. You will have seen in your own communities, confidence in aid and development are being compromised, with ongoing internal disputes on critical issues (racism, exclusion, sexual violence, discrimination) playing out on social media. IPPF are proactively working with a leader on anti-racism

to address our own legacies and urge you as trustees to join us in this dialogue, one that we will be asking our donors to engage in as partners too.

Ultimately, our ability to adapt to this changing landscape, and eventually to re-build from the pandemic provides us with a once-in-a-generation opportunity to complete the change and create an IPPF that is more impactful, more sustainable and is a better place to work at. We must advocate for – and be part of – a rebuilding effort that implements strong strategies for addressing the climate crisis (see new policy proposed for approval), reduces the digital divide and ensures formal health systems wrap around people centred health care. A more equal world where love and intimacy are at the centre of a perfect triangle of sexual health, sexual rights and sexual pleasure for all people everywhere.

Whilst the road to reform has been challenging, the key pillars toward this goal have been largely met; with critical areas and opportunities for completing this agenda clear. It is hard to find justice in racism in America or police brutality in Nigeria or meaning in a global pandemic. We can despair and fragment. Or we can unite and seize the moment to complete the transformation of IPPF. With you, we commit to transformation. By the end of the 2022 General Assembly, we must:

1. Achieve national level governance reform. Global reforms must inspire brave and radical changes at national level in places where obsolete governance setups are causing sub-optimal performance and sustainability. Act decisively if/when there is no progress.
2. Strategic Framework. The community will benefit from IPPF using its strategy design process to convene, to dare, to confront and to re-think - re-imagine - sexual reproductive health and rights (SRHR) for all beyond “choice” alone, outdated metrics, and the ICPD framework. A journey from which IPPF emerges as a recognised convener and thought leader. A journey that continues to bring MAs together, recognising the multiplicity of voices while remaining relevant to changing experiences, language and further building the federation.
3. The pandemic has exposed critical vulnerabilities, putting a spotlight on racial and gender inequality and privilege, and how they intersect to affect health access and outcomes. Worse, it has revealed decades of posturing from the global north – a self-appointed authority on global health matters - as the US and many European governments have failed to even get a very basic grip on the pandemic. It has decimated the engines of 20th century healthcare – hospitals and brick-and-mortar-clinics – while accelerating the engines of the 21st: information technology, online health and self-care. The pandemic has forced some MAs to reimagine how they provide services and we cannot go back to business as usual. Strategic funding in support of those who are making more progress on ensuring access to medical abortion must be seen in this context, but the transformation must be much deeper so that we keep pace with sister SRHR organisations.
We must embrace our potential to become the leading civil society provider of SRH services in crises globally. The recently approved stream 3 and the mainstreaming of the Secretariat’s humanitarian team that has taken part of the restructuring effort must be deployed to their maximum potential.
4. We must have provided measurable support to MAs who stand up and speak out on the more stigmatised elements of SRHR. With the opposition to sexual and reproductive rights gaining ground we must strengthen our Advocacy Common Agenda and have taken winning narratives and movement building efforts to scale through consolidated reference centres.
5. Have measurable improvement in youth segmentation and youth engagement indicators. Be more diligent about engaging target populations in our service design, and especially as leaders, programmers, advocates and educators in MAs, in Secretariat staff and governance. Power is shared, contributions are valued, and ideas, perspectives, skills, and strengths are

integrated strategies, policies, funding mechanisms, and organizations that affect their lives and their communities.

6. As employers, individuals in all their diversity must see us as a place from which to make a difference, thrive, be safe and advance their careers; but not as a 'job for life' where individuals become institutionalized. In terms of advancing gender equality, we occupy a position of great responsibility; we must use it to confront inequity in all its forms. In the last 12 months we have developed a more diverse global BoT and DLT (e.g. first women ever to lead Africa and Arab World regions) but we do not have a culture yet to understand whether marginalised communities are fully represented, let alone have a discussion on what diversity means at IPPF; and by the General Assembly this must have permeated through our governance and management.

Political polarisation and reduced confidence in institutions and leaders is accelerating globally, not just by our opposition, but by our colleagues as we note above. We stand at a rare moment, one that will separate history everywhere into before and after for generations. What is our role, as leaders in this challenging time, to ensure we get there? This is not so much a decision about individual policy proposals but about what reality we collectively decide to inhabit.

END.