

Board of Trustees
3-4 March 2021

Refers to
agenda item 5

Agenda Item: Americas and the Caribbean

Summary:

The official separation of former WHR Member Associations (MAs) took place on 1 January 2021. IPPF has now ten Member Associations with presence in 21 countries in the Americas and the Caribbean region.

At-pace progress of the transition roadmap approved by the Board in September has continued.

Highlights include the mitigation of the risk of loss of 2020 data from the former Member Associations, the recruitment of key leadership positions and the identification of nine to twelve potential new member associations, six of them currently affiliates of the Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation (CFPA).

It is expected that the transition period will finish around 31st March when the transition team will handover to a new regional team.

This document is an update on the three pillars of the implementation of the Americas and the Caribbean Transition roadmap. We would like to thank the support of the Americas Board sub-group for their continuous advice and the collaboration of the Secretariat Task force.

Pillar 1: Separation process

The withdrawal from 14 former member association took effect on 1 January 2021. All the Associations received a formal letter confirming that their membership of IPPF had expired on 31 December 2020.

The regional leadership of the Comprehensive Sexuality Education Centre of Excellence led by Rutgers has successfully transitioned from the former Bolivian Member Association to Pro-Familia in Colombia.

IT systems decoupling has made progress as WHRO administrative rights have been removed, but the full systems separation has not fully finalised yet. The financial reconciliation is still ongoing as WHRO challenged our inter-office transactions calculations.

Data reporting from Member Associations who withdrew

Months of dialogue and careful management of potential conflict resulted in that all former MAs finally signed the deeds of variation to their core funding agreements in January 2021, which stipulate that they must report 2020 programmatic and financial data to IPPF for them to receive their final transfer of core funding. This has mitigated the risk of losing around 5%-16% of IPPF global performance in 2020.

Registration of the name IPPF

WHR have registered the IPPF trademark in twenty-four variations in at least six countries in the region: USA, Colombia, Mexico, Chile, Peru and Uruguay. This continues being a challenge in terms of generating confusion, but it has not prevented IPPF to register the new offices in Colombia and Trinidad.

In summary, IPPF was granted protection in Mexico for the three marks in two classes and further three classes are still under analysis with no oppositions. WHR opposed all of IPPF's filings in Colombia and final decision has not been reached. In the USA, the WHR applications based on the full name have been rejected but the marks based solely on the acronym are under review. In Peru, WHR has been granted protection for their filed marks and in Chile, the former MA had filed for protection of the global IPPF logo which has been rejected by the Chilean authorities. IPPF was granted protection in the UK for all the marks registered with no oppositions

IPPF will continue responding to this challenge through a joint strategy with Planned Parenthood Federation of America (PPFA) where IPPF leads on oppositions in Colombia, whilst PPFA leads on the United States. These actions will not entail a lawsuit but an administrative challenge in trademark bureaus.

Pillar 2: Transitional support to remaining MAs

The Secretariat taskforce continue to provide support to IPPF MAs. The main activity since November was the support related to the 2021 planning, including preparation and approval of Annual Planning and Budgeting (APBs) and of 2020 Annual reports. Support on other areas such as systems, finance and commodities are on-going.

Pillar 3: A new presence in the Americas

Building up the Americas and the Caribbean strategic directions

After the strategic directions were defined by Member Associations in 2020, regular weekly meetings have been held to listen to the prioritised populations and to discuss priority themes. Community dialogues have been held with the transgender community and sex workers networks from Latin America and the Caribbean where MAs have discussed how to serve them better.

Aiming at establishing stronger cross-regional Federation links, we have discussed areas such as Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) led by Profamilia Colombia as host of the CSE Centre of Excellence in the region managed globally by the Dutch MA Rutgers; current funding and political developments in the European Union led by the European Network Regional Office as well as the newly approved Climate Crisis Policy led by DFPA, the Danish MA. A Caribbean-Pacific Member Associations dialogue is being organised for late February to discuss common issues and possible avenues of collaboration in these two regions which share the challenges of being small island states.

ACRO, more than a new acronym in IPPF

The strategic prioritization has informed the concept of the nascent Americas and the Caribbean Regional Office (ACRO), which continues being set-up at good pace.

Recruitment of key leadership positions is ongoing and we hope that by the time the Board meets in early March we will have offered the job to a new Regional Director, a Head of Operations and will have shortlisted for the Deputy Regional Director position.

An organogram for ACRO has been defined, consisting of about 20 staff spread across the two locations working on four main areas: Programmes and Services, Organisational Development, External Relations and Operations.

Keeping IPPF's external positioning

Amid some confusion generated by the use of the IPPF's name by WHRO, we have been working on ensuring that IPPF keeps its leadership position on SRHR and gender equality in the region. Sustained engagement with key external partners including PAHO, UNFPA and civil society has taken place to inform about the plans of IPPF in the Americas and the Caribbean and explore collaboration. Some positive results are that the Latin American Consortia for Abortion – CLACAI extended an invitation to IPPF to join their steering committee; the request by UNFPA LACRO to develop a Memorandum of Understanding and the legal pro-bono advice obtained in Colombia as a result of our partnership with the Centre for Reproductive Rights.

The communications transition team keeps IPPF's digital presence in social media handles on Facebook, twitter: @IPPFamr_Car and **Instagram**: ippfamericas_caribbean focusing on the campaign 'The unseen women' - 'Las Mujeres que no Ves' and on generating content for the IPPF regional webpage ippfamr.org.

IPPF Americas and the Caribbean intensely supported SOMOS MUCHAS (We are many), the Honduran feminist network, that denounced the inclusion of the total ban on abortion in the National Constitution aimed at ensuring that any legal change will not be possible in the future. This has been interpreted as the opposition's reaction to the liberalization of abortion in Argentina in December 2020. IPPF worked hand in hand with national activists and the Safe Abortion Women's Rights campaign, circulating internationally a petition that earned thousands of signatures. These advocacy efforts did not stop the constitutional change but showed to the world the seriousness of the threats against women's rights in Honduras. A statement on the upcoming session of the Human Rights Council is being prepared by the IPPF Geneva team and SOMOS MUCHAS.

Expanding the Federation in the Americas and the Caribbean

Nine new members have been identified to increase IPPF's membership in the region through two processes: the transition of some Caribbean Family Planning Affiliation (CFPA) affiliates to become member associations and the identification of new member associations in new countries. Two further potential members may be identified before the Trustees meeting take place the first week of March.

CFPA transition

Six of the current twelve affiliates of CFPA in St Vincent and the Grenadines, Dominica, Aruba, Antigua, Martinique and Guadeloupe have decided to become full member associations and the due diligence process has started. As a result, some affiliates will become associate members and the ones who do not pass the due diligence will be provided support by CFPA. This means that CFPA will continue to work with half of their current affiliates and will focus on strengthening their capacity to become independent if they wish.

New MAs in new countries

A scoping process started in late 2020 to identify new member associations in priority countries selected on the basis of SRHR needs and potential to contribute good practice to the Federation. These countries are Bolivia, Honduras, Ecuador, Haiti and Cuba. An initial in-country consultancy was commissioned to a) describe the SRHR and gender equality needs of the country, b) suggest a list of potential member associations and c) provide a list of key in-country informants to interview. A second consultancy was commissioned to

conduct in-depth interviews by an independent consultant from outside the country to further prioritise organisations.

Organisations that will be invited to become member associations have been identified in Ecuador, Honduras and Cuba and further research will be made in Bolivia and Haiti throughout February. Due diligence and accreditation process will be undertaken if the organisations decide to respond positively to our invitation.

In Ecuador, IPPF will invite Centros Medicos de Orientacion y Planificacion Familiar-CEMOPLAF one of the main SRH service providers in the country with 46 years of existence and 26 clinics in 11 provinces. A long-standing partner of Planned Parenthood Global (PP Global), CEMOPLAF had an average annual turn-over of US\$ 4.9m before the pandemic, 94% of which was self-generated. CEMOPLAF approached IPPF to express their interest to become a member association and is interested in expanding their services to rural areas.

In Honduras, IPPF will invite the Centro de Derechos de Mujeres (Centre for Women's rights), a leading advocacy organisation for gender equality and abortion rights with an excellent reputation in organisational system and project management. In Cuba, IPPF has had initial conversations with the Centro Nacional de Educacion Sexual – (National Centre of Sexual Education) CENESEX to become a collaborative partner and bring to the Federation Cuba's experience on abortion rights, LGBTIQ+ and CSE.

Looking ahead

Trust and camaraderie continue to grow among Member Associations and the Secretariat in the region. The transition team is developing a reflection exercise on the learnings of the transition period. We are confident that solid foundations have been laid out for a new team to take over the leadership of IPPF in the region and to start a new era for the Federation's contribution to the lives of the populations we serve in the Americas and the Caribbean.