

Agenda Item: Preparations for the 2025 General Assembly

Summary:

At the Board of Trustees Meeting held on 25-26 November 2022 in Bogota, Columbia immediately after the General Assembly 2022 (GA2022), a de-brief was held to share learnings and recommendations for the next GA2025. The overall learnings taken from the Minutes of the meeting is shared below, with details in the Annex.

Action Required:

- The Board to take a decision on whether to establish a sub-committee for the organisation of the next GA2025 or not. If established, will the same group deal with awards?

GENERAL ASSEMBLY DE-BRIEF

In summary, the Board felt it was an excellent GA, with a wonderful spirit and ambience that culminated in unanimous support for the "Come Together" Strategy. In addition, Trustees shared a range of perspectives on a number of dimensions, including the following:

• **Learnings overall:**

- The GA and IPPF's internal dialogue, more recently and generally, have centred on internal matters. It is time to look outwards rather than mainly inwards. It would also be good at future GAs to add more cultural and contextual elements to better include, and not exclude, certain people and groups.
- Participants tended to sit in regional or language groupings and there was not a lot of cross-regional exchange. There was also little time to interact substantially. People would have benefited from more opportunities to meet those with whom they do not usually interact. Perhaps parallel sessions would facilitate this. More space could be given for group sessions to enable more individual and group participation and more 'down time' too.
- Many of the interventions from the floor came from (non-youth) men. It is difficult for many people to talk in a room of 300 people. It is also difficult to have an inter-generational dialogue when youth do not feel it is safe. Perhaps a more proactive approach could be taken to ensure all voices are heard (i.e. women and youth), while time for smaller groups' discussion may promote more inclusiveness.

- The Youth Forum (YF) and GA seemed disconnected - some dissatisfaction was expressed by youth participants, reflecting perhaps that lack of connection. Whilst the GA was to be youth centred, there was a feeling among youth that instead youth were made to fit into the GA.
- There were difficulties finding local Arabic interpreters. If the issue had been identified in advance, experienced Arabic interpreters could have been brought in.
- Many delegates did not read the GA documents prior to the meeting.
- The Awards Ceremony could be separated from the GA meeting to make it more special, perhaps an Awards Dinner?

See Annex **XX**

Excerpt from MINUTES of IPPF BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING Held on 25-26 November 2022 in Bogota, Colombia

End

- **Procedural matters and the agenda:**
 - On appointments and confirmations: recognising that many participants do not read papers in advance, perhaps a short presentation of candidates with could be made including photo and bio.
 - Some discomfort was expressed that every vote was filmed, suggesting it was not a safe space for voting. In the future could young people be able to vote separately?
 - There was very little discussion of finances yet it was a concern for participants and a subject of discussion during coffee breaks. As is the Federation's highest decision-making body, the GA should perhaps spend more time on this.

- **Youth:**
 - A significant number of Youth Forum participants were not aware of the many consultations on the draft Strategy, highlighting perhaps a lack of communication also between MAs and young people. Perhaps an IPPF/GA induction is need for those who have little knowledge of the way IPPF works and its structures?
 - More broadly, it was evident that some MAs are not doing enough to capture the needs and wants of young people.
 - Most young people were not aware of the 5% of funding for MAs for youth programme funding and it would be important to ensure that this money is being spent on youth.
 - Youth also expressed a wish for tangible incentives, for instance, jobs, money or even a certificate of service. More thought should be given to youth and voluntarism.
 - We need a deeper discussion on how we are integrating youth and on safe space for youth.
 - The role of the Global Youth Lead could be more visible.
 - Perhaps a strengthening of Global Youth Network and Regional Youth Networks would help. And could the Youth Forum be held annually, rather than every three years, even if it is virtual?
 - Some Board members had dinner with young people during the GA and this direct communication worked well. Going forward the Board should continue to find ways to communicate directly with MAs and young people.
 - The Board should make a commitment to exploring the best sectoral practices to ensure IPPF is working on youth participation in the best way possible.

- **Anti-Racism:**
 - Some GA participants felt the GA discussion of anti-racism was superficial, noting that implementation is key. However, the Board's statement and

- the GA session were just the beginning of the work and there now needs to be regular communiques on this with the Federation at large.
- The GA had also discussed whether the title for this change agenda should focus on 'identity' and not 'anti-racism'. However, the title of anti-racism was affirmed as a conscious and appropriate choice, given the global context.
 - The context for the Board's statement was anti-colonialism and its timing was prompted by the George Floyd movement, but that is not relevant to all countries and more diverse ways of looking at anti-racism are needed.
 - The Board has a key role to play: Should the Anti-Racism Committee be a Standing Committee?
 - A stronger Secretariat role may be needed (i.e responsibility, benchmarking and resources).
- **The "Come Together" Strategy**
 - Some people expressed a feeling that IPPF is moving away from its core mission. At least one participant observed that the word 'woman' was not used once during the GA and that issues such as teenage pregnancy and rights of women were not covered. "Special interest" groups such as LGBTQI were seen by some to dominate IPPF's mission and the GA. Some wondered to what extent are the donors driving the conversation, or are we influencing donors? This underscores the importance on conversations about IPPF's core mission and values (ie the Charter and Branding projects?)
 - There seemed to be a lack of understanding as to whether the Strategy was a Secretariat or MA of whole-of-IPPF Strategy, which is indicative perhaps of a communications gap between the Board and MAs.
 - There is a need for greater clarity on how it will be implemented by the MAs and communication around the Results Framework.
 - We could explore introduction of an online tracker of the Strategy, to show how IPPF is progressing towards its promised results.
 - We should consider how the MA experience can connect more directly with the Secretariat. It is often said that MAs are not going far enough, but they do not always have the resources to do so. For instance, do they know how to access funds from new donors?

The DG responded to certain issues raised. He recognised that there were many different expectations of what a GA should be like. Regarding the request for more financial information at the GA, he agreed but noted that this year not all of the information was available in time. The DG also agreed that there was still very little understanding on the IPPF Charter, even after the Panel session at the GA, and this would need to be addressed. In terms of IPPF values and the seeming central focus on LGBTQI, some Executive Directors (EDs) had commented that they had found this to be helpful, in pushing the LGBTQI agenda with their Presidents and Boards. It was noted that an Induction Programme about IPPF was needed for EDs, Presidents as well as for young people. Regarding the visibility of the Board, it was the case that, thanks to the GA, MAs now had a clearer understanding of who makes up the Board and what it does.

The Chair acknowledged the importance of a clear flow of information between the MAs, youth and Regional Forums and of enabling the Board to be involved in

this flow of information. The Chair also suggested that the larger discussion should be on what is happening with young people in the world today and pointed to the limits of entirely separate mechanisms for youth. DG responded that the solution was somewhere in the middle of separation versus integration. IPPF is a Federation of MAs and the concept of separation for any groups is not consistent with a Federation.

With regard to the cost of the GA, the DG advised that he had explained to some participants that the current model is cheaper than the previous model of six Regional Councils and two Governing Councils each year. IPPF also covered all participants' full costs, but this should be reconsidered for the next GA. For instance, some MAs would be able to cover their own costs. This year one-third of the budget had been funded by the Chinese. Whilst it would not be appropriate for some MAs to fund the participation of other MAs, the Secretariat could ask for non-earmarked contributions from those MAs who could afford it. For the next GA there would be more transparency over its costs.

On the basis of the small group discussions, Trustees then identified themes that would be key for its future workplan and highlighted issues for possible consideration under each:

- **The shape, agenda and approach for the Next GA**
 - Location – rationale, visa considerations, costs - signal clearly where the money is coming from
 - Enhance GA preparation – how do we help get delegates ready? Have a clear statement of expectation of participants. Consider short videos for sessions, rather than papers
 - More meaningful participation opportunities for youth
 - Less heavy agenda and more inclusive:
 - More creative meeting-methodology, a more culturally sensitive programme, with attention also to disability access
 - Facilitation attentive to who speaks, for example, in terms of gender and age
 - Bring the local community into the GA programme
 - Options for voting online
 - Fewer plenary sessions
 - More MA-designed more diverse panels and presentations
 - More interactive break-out sessions, with more time for dialogue
 - More time for questions
 - More focus on finances
 - Build in more celebration for the Awards
 - Allow time for clinic visits and perhaps down time too

- **Youth**
 - Enhance youth indicators in the Strategy results framework
 - Focus on monitoring implementing the 5% in the budget for youth – release the power without compromising accountability, audit or risk management
 - Improve information flows, listening and dialogue between the Secretariat/Board, and MAs.
 - Strengthen Regional Youth Networks

- Better induction to IPPF for youth – perhaps a short video and perhaps using the Regional Youth Forum also.
- Focus on youth staffing at the Secretariat
- **Anti-Racism**
 - Introduce More pluralism into the conversation (beyond the USA context)
 - Consider the dedicated financial and human resources available i.e. focal point in the Secretariat
 - Focus on work plan, on communications and on monitoring to help drive implementation across the Federation
- Do we need a Standing Committee?
- **Strategy Implementation**
 - The new Strategy is a big departure and phased implementation is important: we need a roadmap/business case to guide that
 - Clarify the role of the Board in Strategy implementation: we could develop a strategy to engage Executive Directors and Presidents. We could focus on youth and dedicated indicators of progress. We could focus on Fundraising
 - Reaching beyond the Federation in implementation is key. Strategic alliances with external organisations are needed. Perhaps Trustees could focus on other Boards to help bring things together? Youth could be encouraged to join other youth led organisations.
 - Consider introduction of strategy tracker
- **Principles and Values – relates to the Charter and Branding projects**
 - These projects offer the possibility of articulating IPPF’s purpose as a more inclusive, expansive agenda that brings together women, girls and LGBTQI. It can be a balancing exercise, and a commitment to more clearly reaching all, as one part of de-colonising IPPF. We should aim to clarify our language/terminology too.
 - This work is also about drawing stronger connections, and flows, from the levels of IPPF core principles to its implementation of the Strategy and on to adoption of tactics relevant to specific contexts. We should aim for drawing out practical links between core values/principles and operations, while encouraging also innovation/experimentation with new ways of acting.
 - The process for Federation wide engagement with and implementation of these projects and their interconnections should be made explicit.
 - The Board should also be clear about its own “red lines” in this context – the minimum of what must be included, for example.
- **Communication and MA Engagement**
 - We could help clarify and communicate IPPF’s structure and the roles and relationships between levels/components including Regional Forums as well as MA links with Regional Offices
 - We should also clearly convey and demonstrate our concern with and commitment to the federation’s sustainability and global solidarity
 - We must clearly communicate to MAs our support and expectations for youth inclusion

- We must champion, across IPPF, the anti-racism agenda, Federation-wide Strategy implementation as well as MA engagement with the Charter and Brand projects
- In all communications with MAs, we need to be sensitive to language/diversity

End