

**GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 2022**

**COME
TOGETHER,
BUILD THE
FUTURE**

Bogotá - Colombia



Agenda Item 3.2

Board of Trustees Report

Action Required

GA to **consider, discuss and receive** the Board of Trustees report.

Report

When IPPF held its 2019 General Assembly (GA), it had a governance crisis to resolve. Fortunately, the Delhi GA paved a solid way forward. Convened by the then IPPF Governing Council under the motto “[IPPF is Changing. For choice. By choice](#)”, the GA approved, by consensus, major reforms to IPPF governance system and resource allocation model. A transition committee subsequently shepherded IPPF to independent appointment of its first Board of Trustees under the Delhi reforms. In affirmation of its accountability to IPPF Member Associations, that Board now reports to the 2022 GA to be held in Bogotá.

The COVID-19 pandemic struck just as the Board was first appointed, preventing trustees from meeting in person until we were thrilled to do so in Morocco mid 2022. Nevertheless, the Board remained squarely focused throughout on its key duty of advancing sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice across the globe. This brief report describes what we have done under the ambitious mandate entrusted to us, and outlines also where we need to do better. This is not a report on work undertaken to fulfil the Board’s statutory duties to oversee performance, managing risk and financial management. Those matters are dealt with elsewhere. This brief report focuses instead on the major transformative work we have undertaken since we were first appointed and on the context in which that work was carried out.

The global context for SRHR has been uppermost in the minds of trustees as we worked to meet our duties as a united Board. From the Board’s perspective, the



centrality of sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice to dignity and well-being of all is more apparent than ever. The largest generation of young people in human history only underscores why. However, those fundamental and intimate rights are under intense pressure.

In our first term, the COVID-19 pandemic saw inequalities only deepen, within and between countries. Government responses, and vaccine nationalism, entrenched barriers to dignity in sexual and reproductive health that are deep rooted in poverty, prejudice, and instability. Many governments failed to craft gender-informed responses to the pandemic. They failed too to rise to the demand for a global reckoning on racial justice.

As a result, sexual and reproductive health and rights were more often undermined. Essential SRHR services were wrongly deemed unessential. Inequality of access to digital assets for SRHR persisted. Structural barriers to SRHR care, information and voice remained, particularly for Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour; for LGBTQI+ individuals; for adolescents, persons with disabilities, and for poor and marginalised people.

In that same period, conflicts in Afghanistan, Syria, Yemen, Tigray and this year, in Ukraine – to name but a few – brought incalculable suffering. Climate collapse drove graver humanitarian disasters and mass displacement. Food insecurity intensified. Decades of inadequate action on gendered violence, when coupled with COVID-19 lockdowns, financial insecurity and overburdened health and social services, saw violence and abuse at home increase. And, amid all of this, misinformation, fear and economic uncertainty were exploited for political polarization, fanning the flames of autocracy across all the world's regions.

This year's decision of the Supreme Court of the United States to strip US citizens of a constitutional right to abortion is perhaps the most widely known regression in SRHR, but it is far from the only example. Which is why the extraordinary



resistance offered by civil society to attacks on SRHR must be celebrated. Feminist and LGBTIQ+ movements won remarkable gains,

from Argentina and Chile to Botswana and Benin: gifting us a many-pointed Southern star that shines a path ahead for our global movement. The Board is immensely proud that IPPF was present in so many of those struggles. When Colombia signed onto the anti – SRHR “Geneva Consensus Declaration”, only intense pressure from the IPPF community caused it to withdraw. When the UK joined an anti-SRHR statement, it was IPPF advocacy that helped force it to retract. Activism works. Advocacy makes a difference. Standing up for human rights is just essential.

It is against this challenging background and determined to be bold in action and for impact that the Board, first established in May 2020, sought to fulfil its duties. Key aspects of its progress in doing so is summarised below, noting again that elements of its statutory duties are reported on elsewhere:

1. Modernize our governance, making it more agile and responsive

In close collaboration with the Nominations and Governance Committee (thank you Neish!) a new Board and four Board committees were established, inducted and their membership renewed as required (see Annex 1 for composition). All bodies worked virtually to translate the Delhi reforms into updated rules, regulations, and policies. We redesigned our agenda to be more dynamic, set and monitored a Board workplan to ensure we were focused and accountable, and prioritised IPPF agility in the face of rapid change, by also maximising the value of our mix of MA-based and external trustees.

Immediately we confronted major challenges: not only the COVID-19 pandemic but the withdrawal from IPPF of the Western Hemisphere Regional Office, bringing with it also the resignations of a handful of trustees. It took us only a couple of weeks to approve 7m USD in loans to support MAs suffering under the pandemic, and less than a week from learning of WHRO’s intention to withdraw, to convene an extraordinary Board meeting that agreed a way forward, a journey overseen by an ad hoc Board committee. We moved just as nimbly when we learnt about the UK FCDO’s sudden termination of our ACCESS programmes, and took the decision to ask the UK courts for a judicial review.

2. Set direction for the Federation and maximise opportunities created by the new resource allocation model.

Perhaps our most significant responsibility was to prepare a new strategy for approval of the Bogotá GA. A bold, inspirational yet deliverable Strategy 2028 has been devised through the most consultative, participatory IPPF process ever. Our Committee on Strategy, Investment and Planning (C-SIP) led the way, and we are intensely grateful to them and their remarkable chair and trustee Abhina Aher. Dozens of roundtables, webinars, national consultations, research reports, youth competitions and surveys meant thousands could speak out and ensured the Board would hear well. Much of the Bogotá GA is built around the resulting Strategy 2028 and we are grateful that support for it has already been so well signalled by MAs' positive indicative vote.

The Board and its committees were already working to drive resources to priorities now reflected in Strategy 2028. We have used the flexibility provided by the newly created funding streams 2 and 3 to boost core investments in self-managed medical abortion (Stream 2, USD 4.2m for the Global Care Consortium led by ProFamilia Colombia), youth engagement and programming (Stream 2, USD 2.2m for the consortium led by Association Burkinabé pour le Bien-Etre Familial) and humanitarian responses (Stream 3, nearly USD 2m from core to complement restricted funding supporting the rapid emergency response of over 40 MAs, and in turn generating further humanitarian funds).

3. Centre the work on, with and for youth with emphasis on inter-sectionality

Intersecting crises: conflict, precarity, criminalisation, racism, austerity, the climate crisis: all disproportionately affect young people, both their lives today and their trajectories over decades. Young people are giving rise to new leadership, new practices, and new conversations, challenging the status quo and creating possibilities for more hopeful futures. Four trustees (Rosa, Uluk, Surakshya and Jacob) were under 25 years old at the time of their appointment; two more (Donya and Sami) were MA youth volunteers but all trustees have worked to centre the Federation on youth. Stream 2 funding, the requirement that a percentage of technical support vouchers and 5% of core grants be allocated to youth led initiatives are evidence of that effort, as does the convening of the pre-General Assembly youth summit.

The Board has further prioritised work towards making the IPPF Secretariat an anti-racist organisation. We issued a bold statement on our commitment to anti-racism, admitting past failures. We have developed - in partnership with the Secretariat and selected MAs - a transformative Secretariat Anti-Racist Plan of Action. Its

implementation is underway, and we trust that will inspire MAs to take similar steps.

4. Increase transparency and accountability

The Board has also worked with the NGC to increase transparency and accountability. Board agenda and papers are available to the membership. An annual Board workplan measures our performance against agreed goals, while the NGC led individual and collective assessments of Trustee and Board performance.

The pandemic limited our ability to visit MAs. However, we have stepped up efforts to communicate virtually, particularly as we developed Strategy 2028 and in the lead up to the Bogotá GA.

5. Stimulate MA Governance reform

Governance reform is also needed at MA level, which is why it has been so encouraging to see three groups of MAs join the MA governance reform initiative. Some changes are already underway, and others are planned. However, to remain relevant, credible and effective, more governance reform at MA level is essential across the Federation.

Through our Membership Committee, we also oversaw design of a 'new' (cycle IV) MA accreditation process. The new process involves application of fewer but more solid standards and the possibility of lower transactional costs with more virtual assessments where appropriate.

6. Oversee the Secretariat's executive tier

Working in strong strategic partnership with the Director General (DG) has been a top priority. It has proved to be inspiring, productive, and highly rewarding. When the Director General's first four year contract was coming to its end, we instigated a thorough multi-stakeholder performance assessment with the help of external consultants from Russel Reynolds. The results were impressive, affirming the skill, strength, and integrity of our DG. We were delighted that subsequently he accepted our offer of second and thus final term of office. You will see in his report details of the extraordinary transformation of the Secretariat that he has led during the reporting period, while maintaining funding and support for MAs in one of the most difficult periods in our history.



This progress, thanks to effective work also with the DG, Secretariat and MAs, is enormously encouraging. However, the Board is very much aware of the challenges and responsibilities ahead.

We rely on you, our MAs, to help drive forward at pace the strategic re-alignment needed to realise the potential co-created by Strategy 2028. We will need your leadership to steer us toward a new Federation Charter that can hold us mutually accountable, and which can be the basis for renewal of the IPPF brand too – of the way we present ourselves to the world so that who we are, what we do, how we do it, where and for whom is far more clearly conveyed.

The governance reforms that the Delhi GA enacted were both necessary and urgent. As the first Board emerging out of that, we are immensely proud to report that in our view, despite the pain and uncertainties in the lead up to those reforms, they were more than worth it. Our Federation is stronger, more strategic, more agile, more sustainable, and more effective because it changed itself for the better: for choice, by choice.

But nothing would have been possible without people willing and able to do the necessary work. We give heartfelt thanks to our amazing NGC Chair and members, the inspiring chairs and members of the Board committees, and to all those across IPPF who worked to advance governance reform around the Federation.

IPPF as a whole, and the Board in particular, also owes a huge debt of gratitude to our DG, Alvaro Bermejo, for his indefatigable, visionary and constant leadership throughout. At every turn we have benefited greatly from his guidance, from his remarkable senior leadership team, the hard-working staff of the Secretariat and the invaluable contributions of MA staff across the Federation. Partnership between governance bodies and staff has been and will continue to be key.

When we respect each other's distinct roles; when we work to complement, not



compete with, each other; when we act in mutually respectful partnership for shared goals, then great things can be delivered for SRHR. In other words, when we come together to advance rights, justice, and dignity in the intimate spheres of sexuality and reproduction, millions benefit. And, that is the core message of this Board to our MAs worldwide: Let's Come Together, in Bogotá and beyond, to build a world where sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice can be enjoyed by all.

ANNEX 1. BOARD AND BOARD COMMITTEES (as of 24 September)

Board of Trustees			
Kate Gilmore	External	Sami Natsheh	Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association
Bience Gawanas	External	Surakshya Giri	FPA Nepal
Abhina Aher	External	Donya Nasser	Planned Parenthood Federation of America
Isaac Adewole	External	Aurelia Nguyen	External
Rose Marie Belle Antoine	FPA Trinidad and Tobago	Andreas Pager	New Zealand Family Planning Council
Rosa Ayong Tchonang	Cameroon National Assoc. for Family Welfare	Elizabeth Schaffer	External
Ulukbek Batyrgaliev	Reproductive Health Alliance of Kyrgyzstan		
Santiago Cosio	Mexfam (Mexico)		
C-FAR (Finance, Audit and Risk committee)			
Elizabeth Schaffer	External	Maisarah Ahmad	Federation of Reproductive Health Associations Malaysia
Bience Gawanas	External	Nicolette Loonen	Rutgers (Netherlands)
Judith Maffon Gbehinto	Association Béninoise pour la Promotion de la Famille	Lakshan Seneviratne	FPA Sri Lanka
Membership Committee			
Donya Nasser	Planned Parenthood Federation of America	Jossy Délicia Dukere	Burundian Association for Family Welfare
Ulukbek Batyrgaliev	Reproductive Health Alliance of Kyrgyzstan	Ann Hendrix-Jenkins	External
Amadou Bah	Association Guinéenne pour le Bien-Etre Familial	Vinod Kapoor	FPA of India
		May Myint	Myanmar Maternal and Child Welfare Association
C-SIP (Strategy, Investment and Policy committee)			
Abhina Aher	External	Gurminder Singh	FPA India

Santiago Cosio Mexfam (Mexico)	Amelia Zawangone Mozambican Association for Family Development
Petra Bayr External	
Tarah Demant External	Ritika Dhall Donor representative
Yueping Guo China FPA	Chipo Gwanzura IMAP Chair
RATC (Resource Allocation Technical Committee)	
Isaac Adewole External	Chehak Bhatia FPA India
Sami Natsheh Palestinian Family Planning and Protection Association	Christopher Kamau External
Nynke Renske van den Broek External	Diana Abou Abbas External