

GENERAL
ASSEMBLY 2022

**COME
TOGETHER,
BUILD THE
FUTURE**

Bogotá - Colombia



Agenda Item 6

**Chart Our Identity, Build Our
Culture**

Summary

Since Strategy 2022, IPPF has had to respond to a world increasingly characterised by division and hatred and from that some of the most profound social changes in decades; #metoo, #aidtoo, Black Lives Matter, as well as growing conflict within the women's movement particularly on gender identity and expression, and increasing polarisation towards decriminalising sex work. This paper steps out how we have responded to these changes, highlighting IPPF's commitment to addressing colonisation and racism, to doing more on climate action and stepping out to the front on sex workers rights. This is what the modernisation of our governance and a stronger management team has made possible, and this paper shares that progress with you and establishes context for the IPPF Charter and the Global Rebrand, once Strategy 2028 has been approved.

Action Required

The GA to note the brief, including the attachments.

Report

Part of our collective role as a Federation is in emphasising the links between various movements and our mandate; ensuring we remain resonant and relevant. Since Strategy 2022, a new generation have brought to the fore some critical social reckonings; #metoo and #aidtoo played out online and in the print media. The pandemic brought fresh revelations, it showed a virtual generation unperturbed by borders who were very much exasperated with the INGO establishment - they mobilised on WhatsApp and took their fight to twitter and other public platforms. In this, we recognise that much of the social change over the past few years has been happening *to us*. Organizations and the people within them have been asked to first challenge and change *ourselves*; to question everything we once knew about our identity.

The utilisation of online platforms in this manner satiated the need for belonging - especially pertinent during the pandemic lockdowns - and this coupled with the confirmation bias so prevalent in social media, built the necessary momentum for change. However, not all but some of the confirmation bias has now been proven



to be explicitly linked to the disinformation machinery financed out of Russia and the US. They exploited weak controls on largely unregulated social media to deliberately target sexual and reproductive rights and the women's movement. This has sowed division amongst us and cleaved intersectional factions predominantly along the lines of religion, gender and race. This has provided a distraction at a scale which we have not fully reconciled. Whilst many years in the making, we have since seen some of the greatest losses to sexual, reproductive health, rights and justices in our lifetimes.

This emphasis on our internal dynamics – whilst necessary – has disenfranchised both supporters and more marginalised communities, many of whom have been put off by the spectacle of infighting. It has been bittersweet. Through deep introspection and a commitment to aligning our values to our behaviours, IPPF has emerged largely unscathed and we have made great progress on our issues, some of which are referred to here, but we are also impacted by a broader INGO crisis, one of [legitimacy, of core identity and of relevance](#). An unintended consequence of these debates has been a quieter sector voice, internal polarisation and in turn a wider identity crisis. A crisis many were poorly prepared for as the professionalization of INGOs over the last decade meant many were ill equipped for the socio-political conversations playing out within them.

The challenge for IPPF now is to reconfigure ourselves, to chart our identity and build our culture in a way that reconnects us to the mandate and vision, without excusing us from the urgent change demanded of us.

A necessary part of sorry business is to confront our history, and our 70th anniversary offers an opportunity to reflect on both our achievements and the more troubling undercurrents. The new strategy is informed by the principles of decolonisation and antiracism. These are profound topics that impact on our daily lives, as well as our professional ones. To inform our efforts and expand our understanding and action we have questioned the intellectual, ethical and political currents that lead to the formation of IPPF into the current century. IPPF needs to better consider its co-founders – including those from the global south – in their contemporary socio-political-economic milieux.



Our **anti-racism work** is ongoing; the report commissioned and delivered to us in 2021 showed the cracks in our structures, with inequalities, power imbalances and racism spotlighted. We are implementing the key recommendations and making amends to our organizational culture by ensuring our hiring, promotion and remuneration processes are fair and equitable. We acknowledge and recognize that we are part of a learning curve. The Anti-Racism session at this GA builds on this work, and critically signals a pivot as we *expand the lens to the Federation*. This session seeks to continue our discussion – where we look to the future and ask the question – what does a decolonized IPPF look like? Through this dialogue we propose a pathway toward reconciliation, bringing the margins back into the centre where they belong. We confront the eugenics movement as it intertwines with the family planning movement, and we stay alert to worrying frames that have emerged out of responses to the climate crisis and which will threaten climate action¹. In doing this analysis, we embrace the long and proud legacy of progressive, liberative discourse on sex and sexuality, the contrasts and conflicts between a western liberal feminist movement and the colonial social and political realities of the time.

During the GA, we will explore with you what IPPF can do to authentically create spaces that are free of racism. This is our collective moment and it has the potential to be one of the biggest positive disruptors. We must take the steps to deliver action and meaningful change for all of us if we are serious about advancing sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice.

Another area we are seeking to address are aging development and health agendas that do not mirror lived experience; narrowing our focus to safe topics such as ‘family planning’, whilst avoiding areas where we have made great strides, i.e. safe abortion as well as where we can learn from each other, such as our commitment to LGBTQTI+ or sex workers. We appreciate that in many settings small steps matter, it is this language that has allowed a better relationship with *government*, but what we also know is that along the way it has hampered our progress with *people*. As you have seen in some of the preliminary work leading into the strategy, we are entering the most sexually and gender diverse generation, who are also the most technologically literate and who are

¹ For a decolonial perspective on the climate crisis and sexual and reproductive health, rights and justice refer to our policy position [here](#).



increasingly [speaking about pleasure, about consent and about human rights](#). Failure to depathologize, to decolonize and to perpetuate old family planning tropes will distance us from younger, queerer people and it will inhibit our growth. So too, with sex workers.

The recently approved [IPPF Sex Work Policy](#) makes clear our position and commitments with regards to sex work; it was informed and co-authored with MA's and sex workers. This is the first time IPPF has adopted a policy position on sex work. It presents human rights-based values and principles which apply broadly to all contexts, without being prescriptive about approaches or actions. It aims to provide a framework to guide our work, and is based on sex workers' lived experiences in all their diversity. It is rooted in positions taken by sex worker-led organizations and networks across the world, and in documents that IPPF has discussed and published in the last few years particularly Sexual Rights: An IPPF declaration. *Come Together*, the 2023-2028 strategy to be approved is bold, youth focused, and it has stretched the current imagination of what service delivery and advocacy looks like across the sector by embedding pleasure, love, intimacy and care as a driving force. The strategy lays the platform for urgent action required for IPPF to make its values clear and explicit through an **IPPF Charter** all members sign up to. IPPF is confronting who we were, who we are and who we aspire to be. The strategy will require us to act with courage, even when that forces us into more difficult discussions and struggles with our own values, beliefs and biases. Given the changes in our society and spelt out in the strategy if there was a moment in our history to rebrand; it is now.

The IPPF brand is not only a logo, or name; what makes a brand is its values and messaging. Where we currently are with our branding is slow, it lacks clarity and cohesion, and more importantly it currently struggles to attract the very people who IPPF is for: youth. The global rebrand will bring to life the new IPPF, it will shed the past, brand and values confusion and allow us to clearly define and unapologetically announce who we are. A **global rebrand** will allow IPPF to solidify its reputation, aspirations and the new IPPF with our partners and a new generation currently out of our sphere of influence, especially those young people who are more vulnerable, yet have been central to #metoo, #aidtoo, Black Lives Matter and more. We will build on MA brands, connecting them to each other and to the changing face of the LGBTQI+ fight, as well as join those on the frontlines of



decriminalising sex work, taking climate action and more. We will transform our brand positioning; our visual look and feel across all platforms. This will position us as progressive, relevant and influential leaders breaking the mould on SRHR. The Charter will be the foundation from which the rebrand will work from, bringing to life and living these values through the new IPPF brand.