

Agenda Item: Addresses by the IPPF President and the director general.
Director General's report

Summary

The Director General highlights progress made in the last two years, reflects on lessons learnt and challenges for the next phase.

Action Required:

GC to discuss and note the report.

With just over two years in the job and this being the final meeting of this Governing Council, I have been reflecting on what we have achieved together in the period, the lessons learnt and challenges ahead.

The start (May 2018)

In May 2018 I shared my initial 100 day plan with the Governing Council. I committed to visiting MAs in each and every region in my first six months to quickly develop an understanding of the Federation, what its membership and leadership want. We were coming through a bumpy period, with the Global Gag Rule introduced the previous year hitting MAs hard, a serious safeguarding case painfully managed, a traumatic attempt to move SAR and ESEAOR regional offices to Bangkok, and a leaderless Secretariat since the sudden departure of my predecessor five months earlier. We knew, however, that we had a solid foundation and positioning to build on.

Two were the main deliverables in that plan: a) an externally focused Secretariat business plan that accelerates implementations in strategic areas where we are falling short of commitments and b) a coherent and bold narrative that donors can support and invest in.

In my first few months I'd identified gaps in pace, accountability and solutions orientation, we prioritised tackling a collapsing financial accountability framework and launched a Business Plan which tested a more MA-centred way of working, both in its design and implementation.

We also signed the WISH2ACTION contract, worth £130M over the three years. It was the largest contract IPPF has ever signed and the first commercial 'pay for results' contract. Setting up to deliver on this was going to be a major challenge.

The crisis (May 2019)

It soon became apparent there were deeper and longstanding issues with safeguarding, mismanagement and fraud. Not just in MAs but in the Secretariat itself. We were having to deal with fraud cases and safeguarding allegations several regions and MAs, all in a pretty public way at the time of #MeToo and macho politics.

I believe we all instinctively knew that a proper incident management system, which included implementation of the safeguarding policies would reveal deep, systemic issues. A focused GC taskforce worked with the Secretariat and an external expert to develop a framework and set of safeguarding related policies. We are not yet exactly where we need to be (a detailed update is in your packs), but we can now identify behaviours and trends within the Federation that were previously hidden or invisible.

Twelve months into the job, the organisation was at the edge: donors one scandal away from withdrawing their funds, WHR initiating a process of withdrawal that would seriously undermine IPPF's position as the SRHR global 'go-to' place and no real way to deal with the power dynamics that underpinned the situation and prevented the Federation from delivering at its best. I couldn't find a way forward and in May 2019 offered my resignation.

The Federation reacted; the GC developed a hugely ambitious pathway for reform guided by two independent commissions that would present recommendations to the membership gathered in an extraordinary General Assembly. Our donors and investors believed in it and committed to maintaining (and even increasing) their support to help IPPF see the reforms through.

Achievements and progress

Much to highlight and we can all feel proud.

- I walked into a Directors Leadership Team that was unable to operate as a team and hadn't been doing so for years. A combination of existing high performers, lifting existing talent from within and bringing in exceptional, outside talent from all over the world has created a powerful DLT that is laying the basis for a unified, high performing Secretariat. Whilst not yet wholly completed, this change has been recognised both internally and externally. And I'm proud that for the last two years we have been placed amongst the highest performers on the global health 50/50 gender equality index. We are now able to be authentic and advocate for improved gender programming.

- The Business Plan has created a series of MA hosted and led centres of excellence. Particularly exciting is how they have consolidated IPPF's leadership in three new areas of work, which have come together in the "Movement Accelerator Platform." This platform combines winning narratives and defensive and offensive strategies to counter the opposition and is already being recognized externally. Through the Narratives Centre, the Gates Foundation made their first investment in reframing in Africa, supporting three MAs. The Open Society Foundation have moved from project funding to providing flexible support to roll out an integrated Movement Accelerator Programme in Europe. You have a detailed report on the Mid Term Review of our Strategic Framework in your packs.
- WISH has gone from strength to strength, delivering against a complicated RBF contract; and exceeding our expectations. This will buy us critical time as we weather the implications of Covid-19. During its first year of implementation, we made notable progress in advancing women's and girls' access to quality, sustainable SRHR services delivering more than 6.9 million Couple Years Protection (CYPs), and reaching 950,000 additional users. We met the global youth target for the end of the programme, with 15% of all clients being under the age of 20.
- Our implementation of the Advocacy Common Agenda continues to deliver. You have heard of our contribution to the Nairobi ICPD+25 meeting, where MAs mobilised to influence governments on committing to measurable SRHR outcomes.
- The support from our donor and partners carried us from crisis to confidence; and cannot be underestimated. Their belief in our ability to change has certainly been tested at times, but we can proudly say in good conscience that we have put the mission first and they have responded. We are still feeling the impact of the global gag rule; we are also grappling with a shift in approach from our very important anonymous donor, but even in these extraordinary circumstances we have continued on an upward trend on total income, on the back of maintaining core grants and increasing restricted funding. Our baseline was USD96m in 2017, went to USD139m in 2019; and now have a total budgetary commitment of USD151m in 2020.

A new cycle (May 2020) Lessons - legacy, learning and future

This is where we are now. Moving into what should be a historical GC meeting that creates a new cycle of performance and opportunity. It comes at the most uncertain of times that have required a virtual meeting rather than the face-to-face meeting and celebrations we would have wanted.

The expectations are huge. First and foremost from the MAs whose frontline health care workers are being tested to the extreme by the C19. Second by investors and donors who are equally feeling the bite of C19. The World Bank predicts that the pandemic will have a devastating effect on both emerging and donor economies. Europe is seeing forecasts predicting contractions of the economy ranging from -3% to -13% and sadly we will have to compete with WHO for some of the donors' funding. Trump's defunding of WHO is another example of how macho politics are being used to deflect from the crisis, whilst doubling down on an ultra-conservative ideology, despite the human cost. You have a detailed paper on Covid19 as part of your packs.

Plenty of progress to be proud of. But no doubt frustrations and opportunities for improvement remain. Netsuite and our financial system is not yet delivering as it should, the unified, agile and efficient Secretariat is nascent, we should investing better on key human resource talent (staff and volunteers), our services could do with some modernisation and MAs are not yet at the centre of this Federation. However, our biggest remaining challenge is to put young people at the centre of our MAs and Federation. The most heartening response to the multiple aftershocks of the crisis in May 19 was led by young volunteers. They also played a key role in Delhi, but they are not central in most MAs or in the Secretariat. We are currently exploring how we design a more deliberately youth-centred Federation.

These reforms are necessary to fully deliver on our Strategic Framework commitments and to retain investor confidence. To better prioritise resources across the Federation and reduce unnecessary bureaucracy that has got in the way of better supporting MAs and the people they serve.

The work of the Commissions and the consensus reached in Delhi propelled. It is now for this GC to proudly launch IPPF into a new cycle of modernization. So many of you have given everything of yourselves so that we can deliver on the Delhi consensus. I want to thank all of you who depart IPPF with this generous legacy. You have ushered and steered IPPF through turbulent waters and into a new era.

END.