

Donor Advisory Group Meeting Minutes

Wednesday, 17th June 2025

Participants List

Name	Title & Organization
1. Sally MacKay	Assistant Director, Health Policy Branch, Development Policy Division, DFAT, Australia
2. Claudia Thériault	Deputy Director, Women', Children and Adolescent Health and Rights, Health and Nutrition Bureau, Global Affairs Canada
3. Lena Hothes	Chief SRHR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Denmark
4. Minja Niemenen	Deputy Director, CSO's Development Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
5. Iina Alli	Senior Advisor, SRHR, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Finland
6. Susanne Ziegler-Wirtz	Team leader - Sector initiative population dynamics, sexual and reproductive health and rights (PD/SRHR), GIZ, Germany
7. Alina Noeth (<i>virtually</i>)	Advisor, PD/SRHR, GIZ, Germany
8. Almut Knop	Head of Division, Division for Social Protection, Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights, BMZ, Germany
9. Anne Holmes	Policy Co-Lead, Global Health Team, Development Co-operation Directorate Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland
10. Satomi Ichino	Assistant Director, Global Health Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Japan
11. Ayako Masuda	First Secretary, Economic Section, Embassy of Japan in the UK
12. Lars Faber	Senior Policy Officer, Department of Social Development, Health and AIDS Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Netherlands
13. Nina Strøm	Senior SRHR Advisor, Health Department, Norad, Norway
14. Camilla Salvesen Holst	Senior Adviser, Section for Gender Equality, Norad, Norway
15. Selina Baumberger	Senior policy advisor, SDC Health Focal Point, Health, SDC, Switzerland
16. Jane Hobson	Senior Social Development Advisor, FCDO, UK
17. Katie Chapman	Senior Social Development Advisor, FCDO, UK
18. Kate Gilmore	Chair, Board of Trustees, IPPF
19. Daren Paul Katigbak	Vice Chair, Board of Trustees, IPPF
20. Alvaro Bermejo	Director General, IPPF
21. Mina Barling	Director, External Relations Division, IPPF
22. Manuelle Hurwitz	Director, Development and Impact Division, IPPF
23. Varun Anand	Director, Finance and Technology Division, IPPF

24. Riva Eskinazi	Director, Donor Relations, IPPF
25. Stefanie Wallach	Director, Performance, Learning and Impact, IPPF
26. Anne-Sophie Stockmarr Becker (virtually)	Global Lead, Political Advocacy & UN representative, IPPF

Agenda

1. Welcome (10 min)

Lena Hoths, DAG Chair

Alvaro Bermejo, Director General, IPPF

2. Financial Results in 2024, Outlook for 2025-2027 & Overview of Resource Allocation to MAs (1 hour)

Varun Anand, Director, Finance and Technology, IPPF

3. Changing landscape in the UN – Donor Reflections (50 min)

4. IPPF Secretariat Accountability Mechanism (SAM) Implementation (35 min)

Manuelle Hurwitz, Director, Member Association Development & Impact

Stefanie Wallach, Director of Performance, Impact and Learning

5. AOB (5 min)

- Update on the Leadership Transition
- Update on the upcoming Board Meeting (19-20 June)

Minutes

Welcome

Lena Hoths (LH), MoFA, Denmark opened the meeting as Chair welcoming to participants to this in person DAG meeting, following IPPF's 2025 Meeting for Donors and Consultative Partners.

Alvaro Bermejo (AB), Director General, IPPF expressed appreciation for donors' attendance and framed the session as an opportunity for deeper dialogue following prior presentations. He noted that the financial accounts were finalized in time for this meeting, in response to strong requests from the donor group.

Agenda item 2: Financial Results in 2024, Outlook for 2025-2027 & Overview of Resource Allocation to MAs

Varun Anand (VA), Director, Finance and Technology, IPPF presented IPPF's financial results for 2024, including expenditure against budget, income trends, and reserves status. (*figures listed below are audited and will be submitted to the Board for the forthcoming meeting in June 2025*).

VA noted that IPPF was now in a significantly stronger position compared to previous years, when IPPF faced a 10% funding cut and significant uncertainty. He emphasized IPPF's positive trajectory in 2024 and shared projections through to 2027:

1. Summary of Financial Statements for 2024

- IPPF is ending 2024 with a consolidated balance sheet of **USD 112 million**, up from **USD 91 million** in the previous year, the majority of which is **designated funds** (USD 40m), including core funds for MAs and \$15M for IPPF's Harm Mitigation Taskforce, Fight Back Fund, and HER Fund and Individual Giving.
- IPPF ended 2024 with a **higher income** (+3.5%) to 2023, at **USD 125 million** across unrestricted and restricted funding. IPPF's total expenditure was **USD 110 million**.
- IPPF's strong forex management has resulted in a projected gain of **USD 5.2 million**.
- This improvement is attributed to increased core and restricted funding, efficient financial management, and strategic use of reserves.
- Restricted funding was primarily supported by Canada, Australia, and France, helping offset the decline resulting from the conclusion of the UK FCDO's WISH Programme in late 2023.

- Restricted funding from the U.S. is recorded as accrued income and matched against 2024 expenditure; however, IPPF is likely to lose approximately USD 2 million of this funding due to foreign aid cuts in 2025.
- While **unrestricted core funding** has increased, a decline in restricted funding reflects reductions from USAID and other donor-funded programmes. To mitigate this, IPPF maintains a commitment to cap Secretariat expenditure at no more than 30% of unrestricted core income, ensuring the majority is allocated to MAs. This target was met in both 2023 and 2024, with Secretariat costs kept below the 30% threshold.
- A new **Reserves Policy** will be presented to the Board, shifting from a fixed dollar value to a **months-of-operations metric**, currently at **4.7 months of unrestricted reserves**.

2. Resource Allocation to MAs

VA confirmed that IPPF is at the end of the first three-year core-funding cycle (2023-25), sharing the following headline results:

- All **unrestricted-core grants** pledged for 2023-25 were paid in full and on schedule, which has been critical for the stability of MAs.
- In 2025 **US 37.3 million** was allocated to MAs under Stream 1 (core funding to OECD-DAC eligible MAs) – up from US 36.2 million in 2024. Stream 2 has remained steady at just over USD 800,000 annually.
- Emergency and strategic reserves under Stream 3 (now HER Fund) rose from USD 1.2 million in 2024 to **USD 2.1 million in 2025**; the provisional figure for 2026 has been set at USD 1.2 million until income projections are clearer.
- **Expenditure patterns are stable:** Across 2023-25 roughly 65-70% of spending went to Pillar 1 “Centre Care for People”, followed by around 25% on Pillar 2 “Move the Sexuality Agenda”, with the remainder distributed across the remaining two pillars.
- In 2025 the median cost structure for MAs consisted of about **40 percent direct project costs, 40 percent personnel costs, 10 percent indirect costs and just over three percent commodities**. Finance will investigate outliers whose commodity or overhead ratios fall far outside these ranges and will issue guidance before the next budget round.
- **Total MA revenue rose in 2025**, driven by restricted grants and social-enterprise earnings. Nevertheless, unrestricted grants from IPPF remain a lifeline for many: **15 MAs rely on IPPF for more than 60 percent of their total income, and another thirty-five rely on it for more than 40 percent**. The MA Support and Development, and Donor Relations and Fundraising Teams will design tailored support packages for these highly dependent, typically smaller, MAs.
- The Colombian MA alone accounted for almost two-thirds of the total social enterprise revenue in 2025, contributing USD 68 million out of the overall USD 107 million. In response, the Commercial Sustainability Team will fast-track targeted support to a broader group of MAs – following the sustainability programme pilot - to help them develop and diversify their income streams throughout 2026 and 2027.
- IPPF's new **automated business planning and reporting process** has enabled the finance team to track actual expenditure against budget across every strategic pillar, cost category and MA, giving the organisation a much richer data set for decision-making. Validation of the 2024 half-year and 2025 full-year reports is due to finish by 31 July 2025.
- **IPPF's Membership coverage has expanded.** Affiliates eligible to receive unrestricted core funding have increased from **105 in 2023 to 122 in 2025**, while the number of suspended or unaffiliated entities has fallen from 26 to nine. The Secretariat will keep the allocation envelope scaled for 131 countries so that future affiliates can be accommodated without cutting existing grants.
- The Secretariat can now generate indicative **cost-per-client figures for digital-health interventions versus static clinics**; however, the methodology requires further strengthening. The Finance and SRH Technical teams will refine this digital-health costing template and circulate a draft before the November 2025 technical workshop.
- Draft indicative planning figures for 2026 will be presented to the Board by 31 August 2025. MAs must submit their first 2026-28 budget drafts by 30 September 2025.

Q&A Session:

IPPF's Financial Statements for 2024

Nina Strøm (NS), Norway clarified that while Norway's overall funding to IPPF has remained stable, Norad's contribution was frontloaded in late 2023, resulting in a reduced income figure for 2024. She said that it is reassuring to hear Germany's retained commitments to IPPF and increased contributions in core funding.

Sally Mackay (SM), Australia noted that although Australia's RESPOND II contribution was frontloaded, with two years' worth of funding disbursed in Year 1, the income figure does not reflect the timing of expenditure, as funds are to be used across the full agreement period.

VA clarified that under accounting standards, IPPF is required to record the full amount as income in the year it is received as per UK law, provided the funds are available for use and not contractually restricted. Even if expenditure is planned over two years, unless the agreement specifies limitations on immediate use, the full amount is recognised as income. Any portion set aside for future use is recorded separately as designated reserves.

Susanne Ziegler-Wirtz (SZ), GIZ, Germany asked whether USAID had agreed to reimburse funds already spent by IPPF, or whether IPPF had used its own resources in anticipation of USAID reimbursement.

VA confirmed that IPPF had indeed incurred and spent funds in line with the agreement, expecting them to be reimbursed by USAID. Per current accounting standards, IPPF held a liability of approximately USD 1.8 million related to USAID funds at the end of 2024. This amount could potentially be written off if recovery is no longer possible. He confirmed that IPPF has submitted all required financial documentation and additional closeout papers to USAID, including a claim for approximately USD 3.2 million in closeout costs. If recovery efforts are unsuccessful, IPPF may need to write off around **USD 2 million in already incurred expenditure**.

VA noted that USAID programmes staff do **not have the authority to approve or release funds**. All financial approvals are now routed through the **Department of Government Efficiency (DoGE)**, which is responsible for signing off on any payment requests, including those supported by additional documentation from IPPF. This structural bottleneck prolonged delay in reimbursement, despite IPPF's compliance with all reporting and contractual obligations.

AB elaborated on the financial and ethical context surrounding the USAID funding issue. He explained that USAID issued a stop work order, effectively halting payments. In response, IPPF made a conscious decision to honour employment obligations in line with local labour laws, providing appropriate notice and severance to affected staff. These expenditures are now part of the USD 3.2 million reimbursement claim submitted to USAID, which includes the closeout costs. He emphasized that the situation is not unique to IPPF; many other organisations are similarly impacted.

It should be noted that since the DAG meeting, we have received USD2.4million out of the USD3.2M that we are expecting from USAID.

Anne Holmes (AH), Ireland expressed support for the approach and asked whether IPPF is absorbing the cost of U.S. non-payment or if there is a distinction between "writing off" and absorbing costs?

VA clarified that these are indeed the same, and IPPF is absorbing these costs.

Jane Hobson (JH), FCDO UK sought further clarification by asking how long IPPF plans to wait for a reimbursement from USAID – noting that it may not be granted.

VA explained that IPPF has set a deadline with the auditors to address the matter by the end of 2025. He explained that IPPF prefers is holding off on absorbing the cost until this time, as it represents a liability the U.S. government is responsible for paying, and IPPF intends to recognize it accordingly.

SM noted the inclusion of text in IPPF's Financial Statement, highlighting that the financial impact of USAID cuts means a shift from three-year allocations back to one-year allocations. She commented that this is very destabilizing for MAs and noted that although future projections are unclear, this development is very unwelcome.

VA agreed, noting that this change to IPPF's allocation to MAs has not yet been approved by the Board.

AB added that the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee (CFAR) has clearly stated their disagreement with the proposed changes to the resource allocation approach, emphasizing that this will likely not go ahead. CFAR has stressed the importance of providing greater assurance to MAs, including a commitment that any budget cuts would protect MA funding by reallocating resources from elsewhere, including the Secretariat. AB highlighted that transferring all financial risk back to the MAs by reverting to one-year allocations is unacceptable and that a longer-term commitment is necessary. He noted that although papers have already been prepared and submitted to the Board, it is expected that the Board Chair will support CFAR's position.

LH noted that it appears there is a decrease in Danish funding, however, there was an increase last year. She then asked how IPPF has been affected by the dollar exchange rate, acknowledging that the MoFA has faced significant impacts.

VA explained that IPPF is impacted by dollar fluctuations and manages this through forward contracts, set up 18 months in advance, based on mid-year projections for the following year. These contracts lock in a dollar equivalent to MAs, but delays in fund transfers can result in financial losses. He noted that currency devaluation can lead to receiving less than expected, even if the local currency amount increases. While the reverse is also possible, the current trend shows a devaluing U.S. dollar, which may also affect projections.

On fraud repayments, **VA** explained when IPPF repays a grant originally received in a prior year—such as in cases of financial loss or wrongdoing—the repayment must be recorded as a return to the donor. While such losses are usually absorbed into core funds or general reserves, repayments are reflected in the accounts. As a result, even when a donor has provided a higher grant, the net amount shown may differ.

LH recalled that in the past, when donor payments arrived late in the year, IPPF had to borrow funds to maintain operations and support MAs. She asked whether this is still the case.

VA responded that that most donor funds arrive in the second half of the year, so IPPF uses general reserves to frontload payments to MAs—67% of which must be disbursed by June. He thanked donors who have advanced 2025 payments, as this eases cash flow pressure. IPPF has not needed to borrow since 2019, thanks to strengthened reserves that now also help cover funding needs in the early part of the year.

Resource Allocation to MAs

Almut Knop (AK), BMZ, Germany asked:

1. If grants are earmarked for LGBTIQ+ rights and defenders included under the KALAVAI Partnership, or if they are categorised more broadly under support for social movements? AK noted that, if it is the latter, it will be important to avoid the risk of duplicate funding once the KALAVAI initiative expands.
2. Does the slight increase in the proportion of MAs receiving less than 50% of their funding from a single donor reflects improved in-house fundraising capacity, or is this primarily due to growth in the social enterprise model?
3. Can IPPF please provide further clarification on the two new initiatives announced (Fight Back Fund and Harm Mitigation Taskforce). What are the funding sources, what types of activities these new funds will support, and why are existing mechanisms not be sufficient to cover these needs?
4. Does IPPF anticipate securing income in 2026 from non-traditional donors or high-net-worth individuals?

VA responded to the questions as follows:

1. The LGBTIQ+ earmarked funding is largely coming through restricted of 'flexible' restricted funding through KALAVAI, the social defenders fund supported by Open Society Foundation (OSF) - this includes an allocation of around US 52,000 to Frontline Defenders, with IPPF acting as an intermediary.
2. The decrease in MA dependence is largely due to social enterprise – these figures are improving year-on-year, indicating promising growth of MA's business acumen and sustainability. IPPF is also exploring opportunities to develop individual giving at the MA level, leveraging IPPF's capacity and MAs networks to generate local income.
3. The Harm Mitigation Taskforce was established to assess and respond to the immediate effects of the USAID cuts. IPPF has already released US 4.5 million of the 6 million in reserves set aside for crisis response.

The Fightback Fund, being proposed to the Board in the forthcoming meeting, will consist of a further US 4 million, supporting MAs to support continuation of operations, diversify income through individual giving, support intelligence gathering and investigations and expose anti-rights attacks, and build a stronger movement. **In total, IPPF is investing 15 million from its reserves to support these efforts.**

AB added that although this funding has been designated as a new fund, its governance will remain unchanged. Funds distributed under the Fight Back initiative will follow specific criteria that are distinct from the funding formula used for Stream 1.

4. **AB** also clarified that other than Individual Giving, IPPF currently does not have any specific non-traditional donors supporting core income in the current budget.

Satomi Ichino (SI), MoFA, Japan asked if this detail could be supplied in IPPF's Annual Financial Report and if an update on the implementation status of each stream can be provided, noting last year it was reported that there were delays in progress under stream 2. She requested further information on emergencies funded under stream 3, as this is useful for the donors to understand the context and where support is needed.

VA explained that while the financial analysis shared with donors is not included in audited accounts due to compliance with local reporting standards, it is prepared annually and will continue to be made available. This analysis has been consistently presented at DAG meetings, and the Secretariat expects to provide even more detailed insights on country-level spending in the future.

AB explained that the largest element of Stream 2 is a rolling series of consortium grants. Each year the Board selects one strategic priority where it believes rapid acceleration is needed, and it approves a two-year, multi-country grant (up to USD 2 million) for a coalition of MAs that bid competitively across regions. Past priorities have included self-managed medical abortion, youth-centred programming, and—most recently—the integration of biomedical HIV-prevention methods into family-planning platforms. Because two years of funding are approved at once, the first-year accounts often appear underspent; a portion of the budget is earmarked for the second year.

He explained that delays can still occur. For example, the youth consortium led by the Burkina Faso MA struggled when political upheaval in that country made coordination unworkable, leading to no-cost extensions. The Secretariat has since begun pre-funding joint planning meetings so that participating MAs can finalise workplans before grants formally start, which has shortened lead times, although some slippage remains.

We see that the model is delivering results. The HIV-prevention consortium has already attracted new restricted funding—for instance, from the Gates Foundation after IPPF became the first organisation to roll out dapivirine rings outside a trial setting. Such follow-on investments inevitably trigger re-planning and can affect initial expenditure rates, but they demonstrate the catalytic value of the consortium approach.

Earlier consortiums continue to drive impact beyond their grant periods. Countries that first adopted self-managed medical abortion through the consortium now account for a large share of IPPF's ongoing growth in these services, and peer-learning opportunities (e.g., Ireland joining the medical-abortion consortium) have strengthened cross-regional collaboration.

VA noted that for Stream 3, all relevant information—including country-level allocations and initiatives—was already covered in the presentation delivered by Valerie Dourdin, Humanitarian Director in the Donors Meeting Session (slides available [here](#)). He confirmed that detailed data on the amounts allocated to each country is available and can be provided upon request.

Riva Eskinazi (RE), Director, Donor Relations and Fundraising, IPPF added that IPPF will repackage this information into a more accessible format and share it following the meeting.

JH asked to what extent the current distribution aligns with the Secretariat's strategic expectations, especially in light of recent discussions, and whether the data revealed any surprises or insights that might inform future planning.

AH asked for further clarity on expenditure across activity areas, noting that commodities accounted for just 3% of spending. She acknowledged the earlier explanation regarding accounting variations but requested a reflective or analytical piece—without requiring definitive conclusions—that could offer a ballpark estimate of the actual value of commodities distributed as a result of broader financing. She also asked whether it would be possible to include an approximate breakdown of how much of that value is sourced through UNFPA, in order to better understand the links across different funding streams. AH further asked whether there is a risk associated with such a low proportion of IPPF's own financing being directed towards commodities procurement—particularly in scenarios where other sources, such as U.S. funding or UNFPA contributions, are reduced or withdrawn.

Manuelle Hurwitz (MH), Director, Development and Impact, IPPF explained in response to AH that this is a valid concern given the growing risk in countries that have historically depended on USAID and UNFPA for supplies. With anticipated reductions from these sources, MAs may need to increasingly use their own funding—via IPPF grants—for commodity procurement in coming years. She explained that while the Secretariat can share detailed data on centrally procured commodities and direct UNFPA allocations, a large portion of commodity flows, especially those through government supply chains, remains unclear and poorly tracked, with origins that may include UNFPA, legacy USAID stocks, or other sources. MH noted IPPF's ongoing collaboration with UNFPA's Copenhagen team to enhance visibility and accessibility of supply data, emphasizing that support from donors and civil society in advocating for better data-sharing would improve forecasting and enable timely planning for central procurement. She concluded by confirming the Secretariat's commitment to providing further information on known allocations and follow up with additional details when available.

MH confirmed that MAs do receive commodities directly from governments and it is difficult to determine the source of these commodities (e.g. UNFPA, USAID).

VA added that IPPF's Supply Chain Management team tracks centrally procured commodities and those distributed by UNFPA to MAs, with this data available on dashboards. The challenge lies in tracking "source-agnostic" supplies not reflected in MA budgets, due to lack of data-sharing mechanisms. He emphasized that if such data were shared, it could be integrated into existing dashboards for better analysis. He said that historically most funding (65-70%) has focused on service delivery, investments are increasingly shifting toward strategic priorities under Pillar 2 and 3.

AB added that the majority of IPPF's service delivery consists of contraception. He offered to share this more granular data with the DAG—especially to address any donor or stakeholder questions about IPPF's contraceptive investments.

Agenda item 3: Changing landscape in the UN – Donor Reflections

Anne-Sophie Stockmarr (AS), Global Lead, Political Advocacy & UN representative, IPPF opened the session, highlighting a deep crisis within the multilateral system marked by significant fiscal cuts across the UN and broader systemic challenges. She noted that since March, the UN Secretary-General has launched the "UN 80" initiative aimed at reforming and restructuring the UN through several tracks, including Secretariat cuts, broader system reforms, and reassessment of future mandates. From IPPF's perspective, these reforms are expected to impact agendas on gender equality, SRHR, and the prioritisation of marginalised groups within UN discussions.

AS also pointed to rising challenges linked to the current US administration's undermining of multilateral consensus, including threats to core agreements like the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. She mentioned shifting global dynamics with China asserting itself in protecting the development agenda, and Gulf States gaining greater influence within the UN.

The purpose of the conversation was to engage openly on how to navigate this evolving landscape collectively, inviting input on how governments are responding to these shifts, the future role of the UN, priorities to protect, and how strategies might adapt in light of both external opposition and internal challenges—such as attacks within the UN system itself on marginalised groups like trans people.

DAG Reflections

- Denmark had initially excluded their team from the UN reform task force, but they insisted on inclusion to ensure that values and rights are represented. LH cautioned that her remarks reflect only a small part of Denmark's broader position and suggested this may be true for other participants as well.
- **Finland** emphasized to keep the reflections confidential and noted that much of the negotiation and internal ministry dialogue happens behind closed doors. Despite challenges, Finland remains committed to upholding gender equality and SRHR as core values in the UN reform process. There is difficulty of achieving consensus within the EU and the broader multilateral arena amid complex and overlapping negotiations. Realistically, maintaining the existing SDG language would be considered a significant achievement in the current environment. There is uncertainty over when to push harder or make demands in the reform process. Reflecting a Scandinavian approach, Finland believes the UN should have space to manage reforms internally, even as coordinated opposition gains momentum.
- Norway's Foreign Ministry has a large task force including Norad representatives and broad internal consultation to address UN reform. Norway is part of a bridging group connecting countries from the Global South and North—including Mexico, Kenya, Jordan, Indonesia, New Zealand, and Singapore—which offers an important platform for engagement. Ongoing analytical work distinguishing the UN's normative role from its development functions, observing that the normative role remains poorly defined in discussions. Norway supports strengthening and securing human rights but recognises that Geneva-based UN bodies are underfunded and outdated. Gender equality and women's rights remain key priorities, but there is concern about merging SRHR-focused entities like UN Women and UNFPA in ways that may undermine sectoral focus. There are broader challenges with a fragmented, complex UN system and difficulties reaching consensus in negotiations, noting Norway's own extensive engagement with UNFPA through multiple agreements and the challenges expected as the reform takes place. There is increasing reference to "normative versus operational" roles of UN agencies, within UN reform discussions. While there is a general perception that most UN agencies as primarily operational, entities like UNFPA do not implement directly but perform an important coordination role. This highlights a disconnect in how mandates and functions are understood within the reform process.

FCDO, UK acknowledged the difficulty of contributing fully to the discussion given the fluidity of current developments and ongoing internal deliberations. There is a strong focus on improving the efficiency, coordination, and impact of the humanitarian arm of the UN system, with an emphasis on reaching those most in need. On the global health front, for FCDO key priorities include protecting global public goods, advancing data systems, upholding normative standards, and ensuring evidence-based approaches. Leadership transitions across the system are also being closely monitored. There is a critical need to actively safeguard SRHR in reform dialogues, warning that these issues can be deprioritised as negotiations shift

Denmark's core position is the importance of preserving and strengthening the multilateral system and the UN. While much attention has been placed on increasing efficiency—particularly within humanitarian, peace, and security sectors—LH noted that the normative role of the UN, including human rights, gender equality, and SRHR, has been somewhat sidelined. The MoFA is working to bring these principles back into focus, advocating for a cross-cutting approach that embeds gender equality and SRHR throughout all functions. Rather than debating structural reforms (such as whether to merge entities like UN Women or WHO) the emphasis has been on safeguarding key functions and ensuring that critical issues are not lost in institutional restructuring. LH acknowledged that Denmark feeds into broader processes but may not always see the final outcomes. They also pointed out that the initial position paper they reviewed lacked emphasis on normative issues. In response, and in light of challenges within the EU, they are exploring greater Nordic cooperation to advocate collectively within the reform dialogue.

Switzerland is deeply engaged in the UN reform process, particularly given Geneva's central role in human rights, health, and humanitarian coordination—areas that are top priorities for the Swiss government. As part of their efforts to improve understanding of the UN system, Switzerland recently published a *Practical Guide to the UN Operational System* in May 2025, offering a consolidated overview of its structure and functions.

The booklet will be shared with the group, it can help navigate the complexity of the system.

DFAT, Australia emphasised that the current moment is marked by uncertainty and instability, making it difficult to form concrete positions or fully understand the evolving UN reform process. From Australia's perspective, the situation calls for bold, radical reform rather than minor adjustments—particularly given the potential for drastic funding cuts from the U.S. government. Australia sees swift, decisive action as essential to protect the system before it deteriorates further through indecision or bureaucratic stagnation. She stressed that human rights remain a core value of the UN and must not be allowed to erode. The increasing capacity constraints across missions, where overstretched delegations are unable to participate meaningfully, ceding space to opposition forces. In some cases, Australia is questioning whether to continue supporting platforms they can no longer resource or influence, arguing that inaction may enable regressive forces to dominate.

On SRHR, DFAT cautioned against overextending across multiple forums only to lose consistently, i.e. owning fewer but stronger spaces to advance SRHR. The Commission on Population and Development (CPD), may have become a "poison forum" where progress is systematically blocked. The a future may be shaped by more votes, higher polarization, and asymmetrical tactics, needing to engage in a more combative style of multilateral engagement if necessary.

Ireland echoed many of the concerns already raised, emphasising the need for pragmatic, efficient, and realistic approaches to UN reform. For Ireland, protecting the multilateral system, particularly the UN, is non-negotiable, and reform efforts should ultimately reinforce, not weaken, the institution. There is a the long-standing need for reform and the current moment is a strategic opportunity to advance previously stalled or slow-moving changes. Ireland advocates for decisive and transparent action, with clear timelines, deliverables, and engagement frameworks, while warning against rushed decisions. Human rights and the principle of reaching the furthest behind first will continue to underpin Ireland's multilateral engagement. The SRHR and global health agendas have served as effective entry points for more cross-sectoral collaboration within national systems, breaking silos and prompting new conversations between areas like health and human rights. This model could inform broader institutional coherence. Finally, Ireland affirmed support for continuing this kind of like-minded donor dialogue to strengthen alignment and influence in shaping the reform process.

The **Netherlands** welcomes the UN 2.0/UN80 initiative, noting that the government is awaiting the results of an evaluation of approximately 3,600 UN mandates currently being undertaken by the Secretariat. The Netherlands supports this process as a much-needed opportunity to enhance efficiency and effectiveness, especially in light of the UN's ongoing financial constraints. The goal is to safeguard existing SRHR and health language, strengthen human rights protections in any new structures or mandates, and uphold normative standards around health and SRHR in the face of increasing global pushback.

Germany they reflected strong concerns shared across the group. She emphasised that defending the UN's normative role (including the SDGs, human rights, and SRHR) is a core responsibility of donor countries. Despite challenges in spaces like CPD and CSW, it is best not to retreat from these for a. The reform process must be pragmatic and timely, driven by shrinking resources and overlapping global agendas. Germany's priorities include reducing fragmentation, strengthening WHO, and ensuring SRHR is embedded in health systems strengthening as part of a more horizontal and sustainable approach. While acknowledging the complexity of the task, it is encouraging to see optimism and collective leadership from like-minded countries to help shape a stronger, more sustainable multilateral system.

Kate Gilmore (KG), Chair, IPPF Board warned that current UN reform discussions are not about efficiency, but part of a "destruction agenda" aimed at dismantling the multilateral system. She cautioned against giving the process the undeserved legitimacy of being framed as technical. Instead, she argued, this is a political assault with no credible plan for what replaces the current architecture. She reminded participants that the UN's complexity and inefficiencies stem from political compromises by Member States—not from UN bureaucracy. Agencies like UNAIDS and UN Women were created not because of duplication, but because states failed to reform existing institutions or protect certain mandates like gender equality. She urged donors and civil society to focus less on architecture and more on mandates, goals, and values, emphasizing we need a destination story.

KG emphasised the need to defend and invest in the UN's normative role, warning that tackling reform by starting with structure rather than vision is a fundamental error.

She criticized the reactive and rushed process being driven by events of the past 120 days, saying it's no way to redesign an 80-year-old system born of post-war trauma. She also proposed moving normative and standard-setting functions out of New York and into Geneva, which she described as less toxic and more conducive to constructive dialogue, including through existing mechanisms like the Human Rights Council.

KG emphasized defense of human rights as non-negotiable, rooted in their original purpose, to constrain state power and prevent atrocities. SRHR is not optional or a luxury, she said; the "R" in SRHR must be held front and centre. She urged the group not to discard rights language for short-term tactical gains: "Just because those promises have been broken again and again doesn't mean the promises are at fault."

In closing, **KG** called donors to recommit to the normative core of the UN system, with human rights and SRHR at the centre.

MB addressed key operational challenges linked to budget cuts and the complex issue of U.S. debt to multilateral organisations and civil society. She highlighted a significant communication vacuum, especially around supplies with UNFPA, and emphasised the importance of preserving 70 years of institutional history and technical expertise in Geneva. She noted recent discussions at Wilton Park about a potential new intergovernmental framework to negotiate SRHR and gender issues together to follow on from Nexus. IPPF is supportive of these efforts, particularly if they highlight LGBTQ+ and human rights.

AB expressed profound concern over the absence of a coherent vision guiding UN reform and global health architecture. He warned that budget cuts executed without strategic clarity threaten to severely weaken the SRHR ecosystem. Marginalised groups, including LGBTQI populations, face particular risk as specialized funding streams and targeted interventions—such as those historically supported by the Global Fund—are likely to be diluted or lost in the pursuit of efficiency and austerity. The reform process, largely driven by urgent budget pressures and dominated by one key government (implicitly the U.S.), risks eroding foundational human rights and health frameworks. In such a constrained environment, IPPF may be relegated to the role of a delivery instrument rather than a strategic advocate or innovator, undermining its ability to protect and advance SRHR comprehensively. **AB** sharply criticized current UN leadership for a pattern of appeasement towards the U.S., despite the country's withdrawal from WHO funding and failure to meet its international obligations. He challenged donors to adopt a bolder, more principled stance to reduce the disproportionate influence of the U.S.

AB said that this context places IPPF in a precarious position, confronting both diminishing funding and influence in a shifting global architecture that may deprioritise SRHR and the rights of the most vulnerable. Protecting IPPF's legacy and future impact requires not only resisting these budget-driven erosions but also advocating for a renewed, inclusive vision that centres marginalised voices and ensures sustainable, rights-based health systems globally.

AS wrapped up the session, acknowledging the profound difficulty of the current reform conversation but emphasising the critical need to begin aligning on a shared vision for the future of the UN system. She highlighted IPPF's active collaboration with a broad range of CSOs and movements to push back against efforts that threaten to dismantle the existing human rights frameworks and global norms foundational to SRHR. She warned that abandoning these standards and norms would undermine decades of progress.

AS stressed the importance of creating a UN that truly amplifies marginalised voices, and communities with lived experience, despite the systemic barriers to their participation. She noted that IPPF's Strategy 2028 prioritises bringing these voices into high-level discussions, though this remains a significant challenge. She described the reform process as largely driven by austerity rather than genuine strategic reflection, urging that more transparent, inclusive, and accountable deliberations are needed through established governance bodies. Member State accountability, both for chronic underfunding and failure to uphold international human rights commitments, must be central to reforms. **AS** also expressed concern about the opaque nature of the process, which limits civil society's ability to engage meaningfully.

The group agreed to maintain communication and ongoing information-sharing among this group in the coming weeks and months to support collective understanding and advocacy as the reform process continues to evolve.

Agenda item 4: IPPF Secretariat Accountability Mechanism (SAM) Implementation

It was agreed that written updates on this agenda item via email due to time constraints during the meeting.

AOB

1. IPPF's Benchmarking Exercise

- **LF** shared that as part of the Netherlands' contribution to IPPF, they requested a salary benchmarking assessment of senior leadership, which is particularly relevant now as IPPF looks toward new leadership. The benchmark report was received last week, and the findings were reassuring. The assessment showed that the Director General's compensation is well within the average range compared to similar organisations. This was a requirement of IPPF'S core contract with the Netherlands.
- **KG** noted that the Board remains attentive to the Director General's terms and conditions. The Board is well informed about the salary's position relative to market benchmarks and welcomes the opportunity to share the benchmarking findings with partners to promote transparency. She highlighted that the Board has undertaken its own market analysis to ensure a clear understanding of the role's positioning.

2. Update on IPPF's Leadership Transition

- It was noted that the Director General position is limited to two four-year terms, with AB completing his second term in March 2026. The Board has closely monitored AB's exceptional performance throughout his tenure, which has often surpassed challenging targets. While finding his successor presents challenges, it is also an exciting opportunity given the strong legacy he leaves.
- The Board proactively began the recruitment process 18 months in advance, partnering with the independent advisory firm Perret Laver. The campaign attracted over 100 diverse applications, which were rigorously reviewed to shortlist seven candidates for interviews, now narrowed down to three finalists.
- Currently, the Board is conducting multiple steps in the selection process, aiming to reach a preliminary decision by week's end. However, the formal announcement is expected only after September, following thorough due diligence, reference checks, and contract negotiations. KG highlighted the challenge of balancing competitive compensation with internal salary equity, noting some candidates expect packages aligned with higher-paying markets like the U.S.
- IPPF anticipates introducing the chosen candidate to MAs at the November General Assembly for relationship-building, though the official transition will occur only after AB's term ends.
- It was also noted that KG's tenure as Board Chair will be ending next year, with the new Chair to be selected by the Board from within.
- **DAG** members expressed deep appreciation for KG and AB's leadership and their extensive contribution to the organisation.

3. Update on the upcoming Board Meeting (19-20 June)

The following items will be discussed at IPPF's forthcoming Board meeting:

General Assembly: IPPF is preparing for its General Assembly in November, with all key initiatives framed around this timeline.

New Statement of Values: A new charter of values has been finalised after extensive consultation over several years. The text has near-unanimous support from MAs, with only two expressing hesitations due to misunderstanding an aspect of the poll. The statement is a bold, clear affirmation of IPPF's commitment to human rights and defines what this means for the Federation. The overwhelming support as an emotional and powerful moment of solidarity across the Federation.

Brand and Identity Alignment: IPPF will align its messaging and branding more closely with its new charter of values. While there won't be a dramatic brand overhaul, messaging will reflect the courage, love, and leadership shown by the Federation.

Key Board Priorities:

- Finalisation of the Fight Back Fund, including allocation of reserves to support this work.
- Strategic discussions on IPPF's global geographical footprint, including a comprehensive reviews of IPPF's reform process and its impact.
- Development of a comprehensive policy on gender and gender identity, an exciting milestone.
- Selection of the next Director General, marked by both confidence and deep emotion within the Board.

Closing remarks

In closing, the Chair noted that an extra DAG meeting on the UN reform process may be scheduled following summer break.

Action Items

- IPPF to share briefing on humanitarian responses in 2024 with DAG members
- IPPF to provide DAG with further information on known commodity allocations and follow up with additional details as they become available.
- IPPF to provide updates on the Secretariat Accountability Mechanism (SAM) implementation.
- IPPF to share DG salary benchmarking with DAG members