

Report from the Regional Committee charged with drafting observations and recommendations of Arab World Region on the Governance Reform and Resource Allocation Preliminary Reports

International Planned Parenthood Federation

Following the review of the Governance Reform and the Resource Allocation preliminary report by members of the Arab World Regional Council members, during the regional Council held in Tunis on September 28-29, 2019, and the presentations made by the representatives of the two commissions on the reform proposals and the interaction that took place with the RC participants, the Regional Council members thanked the two commissions for the efforts put in producing those reports and thanked the commission representatives who's presentations raised several follow-up discussions.

Based on the results of these follow-up discussions, the Regional Council recommended that the Regional Executive Committee, which was scheduled to meet immediately after the Council RC meeting, form a Regional Committee comprised of the Presidents of Member Association to formulate the questions and suggestions raised during the Regional Council meeting regarding these two draft reports. RC members also stressed on the need to consider these observations and suggestions in the final draft to be presented at the General Assembly meeting to be held in India in November 2019. They expressed that the participation of the AWR MAs at the GA meeting and the nature of their relationship with the Federation are dependent on taking these observations and suggestions into account.

The observations and suggestions were as follows:

(Report of the Independent Governance and Reform Commission)

- **The shape of Reform: its nature and its causes**

- 1) The RC representatives stressed that they are with the reform, but with a reform that is constructive and evolutionary rather than demolishing and revolutionary. Thus, the question remains as to why the sudden change and why so quickly. Even if there were some problems in some regions, this is not cause for flipping the entire house upside down.
- 2) Why was the reform period limited to only six months to make changes, noting that this is a short period of time insufficient to implement any radical changes for a Federation that has been working for over 67 years, with proud accomplishments that the donors themselves attest to and that the Secretariat is witness to, and which is evident from the reports submitted over the past years to the donors. Unless what was submitted to donors was not actually factual or credible.

- 3) The attendees of the Regional Council meetings insisted on issuing a new version of the reports before the meeting in India, that should take into account the observations and suggestions of all the regions, including the AW region, to serve as the basis for soliciting the views of those participating at the India GA meeting. Following that, the new versions of the reports should be studied deeply and amended taking into account all the different views. The final version of the amended reports which is to be produced at the end of the India meeting should then be presented at the Regional Executive Committees and Member Associations of the regions during the period January 2020 to May 2020, and then to the Governing Council, who's current term will end in May 2020 in any case according to the IPPF constitution.
- 4) Some felt that the general atmosphere in which the reform taking place is characterized with intellectual intimidation and authoritarianism, where there is a constant threat of discontinuing donor funding if the reform does not take place during the six-month period! While donors have been funding the Federation for over 67 years, is it inconceivable that they will not be able to wait for an additional 6 months after the India meeting to ensure that the reform reflects the vision of all members at all the levels in the Federation?
- 5) Some members have also questioned what exactly is the donors' request, and who is communicating with them on this?

Clearly, the proposed transformation will ultimately result in another MSI. Does the world really need another MSI? Is it true that donors are abandoning the principles of volunteerism, rights and democracy which have been the foundation of the Federation's work for the past 67 years?

- 6) If some argue that the six months required after the India would come at a cost for Regional meetings and Governing Council meetings, and that this is part of the reason behind the hasty reform, then indeed what is the value of this cost compared to what will be spent at the General Assembly in India, a meeting which, according to what we understand will cost around 3 Million dollars?

It is saddening that the Secretariat has secured 3 Million dollars for this meeting while the Secretariat had reduced the Member Association's budget by 10% for 2019.

II. Reform methodology:

- 1) Many participants expressed the view that participation in the process led by the two commissions was not at the required level of inclusion and did not take the role and the value of the volunteers seriously. If the two commissions had

two Ex - DGs of IPPF, to whom we show full respect, it should have had at least two Ex. Presidents of IPPF, one in each committee like Mrs. Nina Puri and Mrs. Jaqueline Sharpe, to include volunteer's point of view as well.

- 2) Why was there no representation of the six regions in the commissions that studied and proposed the reforms?
Whereas the fund of three million dollars had been arranged for bringing in the "Reforms"; to ensure the impartiality, it could have been carried out through a totally independent firm.
- 3) According to the opinion of some, the way in which the survey was leading in nature with questions pointing to specific answers. Furthermore, the survey was sent at a haste during the summer months, and with technical issues, the MAs did not have enough time to virtually consult and answer it.
- 4) As evidenced by the above, the survey was filled by only 199 participants out of thousands of volunteers in the Federation, who were supposed to participate, and even more surprisingly, 81% of these 199 were employees, and this staff sample may not represent the full staff opinion. And herein the question arises about the credibility and the representation of the survey and its outputs, especially since the two reports submitted to the Regional Council were drafted based on the survey's results. Furthermore, 19% of the survey respondents being volunteers is a very slim percentage, which strikes deep into the principles of democracy, transparency and participation.
- 5) The efficiency of any project or proposal for change, must be based on a comprehensive evaluation of what has been achieved and a thorough "SWOT" analysis of the obstacles, challenges, strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities by adopting a participatory approach. Has that been done fully? If the answer is no, then why not?
- 6) The reports contained examples of some of the organizations, in an attempt to guide the process of the reform, but these organizations are radically different from IPPF and the nature of its work, which is similar to "comparing apples and oranges". An organization like the International Football Association (FIFA), whose corruption files are not hidden from anyone, cannot be guiding this reform.
- 7) Note that accountability was considered as one of the reasons for the reform. Here we must emphasize that this value (accountability) is already present among the core values of IPPF under the principles of good governance, so what is new in this proposal?

- 8) It was brought to our attention that different occasions prior to the India meeting will be used to promote for the reports of the commissions as is, such as youth meetings and other technical meetings such as the UNFPA Nairobi meeting and in which IPPF MAs will be participating. This is unacceptable and inappropriate since one version will be presented and the participants will not be able to hear the other opinions.

III. Legally

General Notes:

- 1) The draft report did not adopt nor take into account the legal underpinnings that ensure the legitimacy and the continuation of the Federation without losing its identity as a volunteer membership based non-governmental organization, which suggests that what is planned is changing the identity of this Federation into one that is closer to a private company or an organization that is no longer based on volunteer membership. This was evident during the regional Council meeting, where in the presentation of the commissions the main principle of the Federation being “Locally owned, Globally connected” was replaced, much to our surprise, in the presentation with the slogan “ One United IPPF, Globally connected and locally performing ”.

This undermines the basis of this Federation and its values of volunteering and democracy, and raises a legally problematic issue that were missed, which related to the fact that according to freedoms laws, including Charity laws in the Arab world which are similar to other countries are mainly based on volunteerism. Legal accountability and responsibility before public authorities belongs to elected volunteer governing bodies and not to the executive bodies. Associations cannot practice their activities and receive grants from national, regional and international parties without being registered in, licensed and legally recognized in their countries, as the Law recognize federated associations rather than organizations not governed by law.

- 2) Many noted that the current Governing Council has been undermined and no longer has a role to play. Is it true that there will not be a Governing Council after the General Assembly meeting in India? And will the issued recommendations for the General Assembly in India be binding to the Governing Council? Is it true that no dates have been agreed to convene the Governing Council? In the presentation made by the representatives of the commissions during the Regional Council meeting, we noticed the term “TBC” Before the Governing Council meeting. As such, is there is a possibility that the Governing Council will not be held at all. Is this a mistake in the presentation or a misunderstanding on our part?
- 3) In order for the final reports of the Commissions to be legally binding to all the levels of the Federation, they must be amended based on the discussions and suggestions

of the participants of the India meeting to come up with a revised version to be considered at the level of the Regional Executive Committee, who's terms end in 2020, in order to augment them before they are submitted to the Governing Council in May 2020 which will remain legally the highest authority and decision-maker in accordance with the Constitution until May 2020.

The General Assembly

The General Assembly to be held in India in November 2019

- 4) What is the justification for holding a General Assembly in India in November, noting that this assembly was canceled in 1998 on the grounds that donors objected to its existence because of its high cost? It now suddenly appeared without any legal basis for its existence or principles of convening it per the Constitution and regulations of IPPF. Should we understand from this sudden return that it is for purely voting purposes?
- 5) Since the General Assembly has no legal basis, this also applies to the extraordinary General Assembly. How can an illegal body, as mentioned in the expected results of Phase I, authorize amendments to the Federation's constitution and vote on it during the India meeting?
- 6) Each Member Association will be represented by three representatives in the India meeting, including the Executive Director of the Association. Does that mean executives will be allowed to vote, knowing that this is unacceptable by law and is not allowed in the Charity laws of the Federations in many of our countries? While we respect and value the experience of Executive Directors and their professional commitment, and it is important to hear their views, it is equally important to separate executive functions (management) from good governance functions that are volunteer based only.
- 7) Some also questioned, if a member could not participate in the India meeting, could they provide a proxy to others to vote? Is this mandate limited to the same group, for example, youth to youth? A representative of the MA to another representative of the same MA, and should the proxy be to representatives of the same region?
- 8) Does one believe that a serious, in-depth and credible discussions can be held in a forum with a total attendance of about 554 people (170 MAs x 3 Members = 510+ 24 GC + about 20 from the General Secretariat), and that they can reach a real consensus on what will result from the India GA?

Proposed General Assembly in the new structure

- 9) There are several questions regarding the General Assembly pertaining to its legal status, responsibilities and term:
- Regarding the legal status and responsibilities: There is a clear contradiction, in the General Assembly being considered at the top of the new Governance structure, representing the highest authority in the Federation, while its role is limited to advisory matters, for example, the function of “confirming the formation of the Board of Trustees”. As such, to whom will the election or selection of the Board of Trustees be entrusted?
 - In terms of meeting times: It was stated in the summary report that the General Assembly meets “once every few years” whereas in the simplified graphic form it is stated that it meets “approximately every 4-5 years .” Does this mean that the term of the Board of Trustees will also be 4-5 years?

Proposed Board of Trustees in the New Structure:

- 10) According to the preliminary report, the Board of Trustees will be composed of 15 members at a maximum, including at least 5 MA representatives. While the Federation consists of 6 regions, does that mean that there will be a reconsideration of the distribution of the regions representing the Federation? Or does this imply that one or more of the current regions will be excluded from representation? If so, this contradicts the principles of democracy and equality that are the basis of this Federation.
- 11) The report stated that the Board of Trustees is composed of “a maximum of 15 members recruited from both the IPPF membership and externally”. Are those appointed externally Advisors or Consultants? Are they paid individuals? Since they are outside of the Federation, it is obvious that they will not have the right to run for elections or vote, as they cannot be decision makers on behalf of the Federation’s MAs and be destined to take decisions related to the status of MAs, their performance and activities at the national and regional levels.
- 12) Who will choose external members of the Board of Trustees and what skills should they have? Will they be selected by the MAs or by the Director General?
- 13) In the event of the formation of a committee to examine the selection of these external members, what is the composition of this committee and who will choose its members? Will there be representation from the 6 regions of the Federation in it? If there is no regional representation, there must be a private and

independent company, where the Secretariat of the Federation has no authority over it and the regions have a voice in choosing that company.

- 14) We are with professionalism and we respect the experiences of those who will join the Board of Trustees, but one should not be confusing skills with legitimacy, as the experts can provide assistance but are not decision makers and they cannot direct the future of the MAs, because decision makers are elected democratically representing those who elected them.

While we were told that in some parliaments of the countries there are members selected and appointed by the head of state rather than through free and direct elections, and that they have the same powers as the rest of the members of parliament. This example does not apply to the nature of the work of IPPF, whereby how can an outside appointee who has nothing to do with the reality of Member Associations and does not understand the difficulties MAs face in the countries where they provide their services make decision on behalf of these MAs? Even if some will argue such rational, we have to realize that in these parliaments the elected members will be in the range of 200-400 depending on the size of the country. And those to be appointed without direct elections will be in the numbers of 10-20 respectively hence, it is totally unacceptable to have 10 appointed and 5 elected as members of the board of trustees.

Why can't the Board of Trustees composition be as follows: two representatives from each region ($2 \times 6 = 12$) and 3 external members who do not have the right to run for elections or vote.

- 15) The Board of Trustees and its Chair's general functions are unclear. Will there be an International Treasurer? what are the mechanisms of electing them and how long is their term?
- 16) Why are some attempting to dismantle the Federation and turn it into another MSI ? when the Federation is starkly different from it? IPPF is not after material profit but rather calls for the defending SRH and Rights and works to serve the poor and marginalized groups, which enabled this Federation with its MAs to remain rooted in these communities for over 67 years.
- 17) It should also be noted that there are several discrepancies between the English, Arabic and French versions, which contributed to the lack of clarity and uncertainty of reports. One controversy, for example, are that the dates mentioned of Regional Assembly meetings and a General Assembly as well as meeting of the board of Trustees several times a year. If our understanding is sound, all this will be expensive, and so who will pay for this?
- 18) It has come to our attention that two regions of the Federation, namely WHR and EN, have a special status per the country in which they are registered, and that this status

dictates continuing with their current registration format, which means that the Regional Board of Trustees of WHR, as with the EN, will continue as is and will not be required to adopt the regional reforms under the proposed new structure. Accordingly, is there fairness in having the structural changes at the regional level include only four regions, with WHR and EN likely excluded?

It should be noted here that previously; the Federation spent its core funding on board meetings of WHR and EN under the pretext that this is due to the nature of their registration in their respective countries. Hence, if the Board of Trustees and the Executive Committees are to be maintained in the WHR and EN Regions, fairness requires that the Executive Committees of the other regions also remain. Alternatively, if the Board of Trustees of the two regions are to remain and no core funding will be spent on them, only then will the proposed changes to the other four regions be considered. That being said, this matter is not about core funding spent on meetings of regional governing bodies in the six regions, rather the main issue is to allow taking decisions at the regional level in a decentralized manner. And so, if maintaining the existing structure allows the two regions to make regional decisions, then equally, the other four regions should be allowed the same level of decentralization in decision-making.

- 19) As everyone knows, since 1998, the Federation has insisted on the issue of cumulative terms served by members of the Governing Council, which has been applied in the past to all six regions. Even if there were some exceptions that the Federation granted due to a special situation at one of the regions, the cumulative system was applied to all with utmost fairness and transparency. Similarly, we were surprised that it is likely that under the new proposed structure any cumulative terms will not be counted, which means allowing those volunteers who had completed the cumulative term in the Governing Councils under the old system to return as a representative members of the MA in the Board of Trustees or as consultants to the GC under the proposed new structure, which simply means that the new system is designed to allow those who have finished their term to return under a different status. This is unfortunate and unfair because it bears only one meaning, which is that the Federation that always claimed implementing principles of equality and justice throughout all these past years, is willing to break its own rules in favor of some gains that will benefit a few.

Report of the Independent Commission on Resource Allocation

- 1) The proposed resource allocation system, which is based on the World Bank classification, is a system that is unfair to civil society institutions and is non-applicable in its entirety. In particular, in relation to the funds received by MAs from governments in most countries which is considered very small if any, given the fact that most governments do not take the importance of sexual and reproductive health and sexual rights issues, as they are not considered a

priority compared to other challenges to governments such as unemployment, poverty, housing and others.

- 2) The classification of the World Bank proposed for adoption might be appropriate for governments but is unfair and inappropriate for MAs as mentioned above, as well as the fact that the MA's classification would be constantly changing, which threatens the continuity of the work due to instability of funding of Member Associations. For example, an MA that has received funding for a certain period of time could be deprived from that funding as soon as the World Bank classification changes.
- 3) In the proposed new system, it is not clear who is responsible for deciding on the funding allocation, who determines each group's share of resources, what mechanism would be used to determine the percentage of funding, and whether there is a regional role in determining that funding for MAs.
- 4) What about funding MAs that do not provide services but do other activities such as advocacy and lobbying? Indeed, the new system will adversely affect them.
- 5) We in the AWR are proud of mentioning the following fact: the ratio of what the Arab world region gets in terms of funding and has been getting over the previous years represents 4 million dollars of the total funding of IPPF (be it restricted or non- restricted funding (approximately 130 million). This funding helped support the continuity of IPPF work in 14 countries by supporting MAs rooted in those communities.

It is also a source of pride that 6 Member Associations of the AWR are among the top ten MAs federation wide in terms of key performance indicators (KPIs), despite the known difficulties experienced by the region since 2011. Despite all of that, Member Associations have made every effort to perform in an exemplary manner, confirming their presence within the Federation, being responsible for 10 of the most important indicators of the Federation and for the implementation of its strategic framework.

Conclusion

All of the above is a summary of many of the points made during the Regional Council session, which was attended by representatives from Central Office who presented the proposals for the reform. We have only touched on the basic points, but there are certainly many other points that we have reservations on in relation to the content of reports submitted to us and that are intended to be presented at the General Assembly meeting in India.

As already mentioned, we expect that our proposals to be taken into account in writing the revised version of those reports, and we are sure that there will be some other regions that will ask the same. We are making it clear that the extent of response to our proposals and amendments which should appear in the revised reports, as well as the duration of the process of reform, are all factors that will contribute to us examining whether the AWR MAs will participate in the GA meeting in India or not. We also believe that this will impact the nature of the relationship between the region's MAs and IPPF in the future, which we hope will not be a negative one, but which is a possibility that we are prepared for as for us it is a matter of principles of democracy and rights that is initiated in the grassroots going all the way up to the national level then to the regional level and ultimately the international one.

We also stress that if the structure of governance and its meetings at WHR and EN regions remains the same, we will also maintain the regional Executive Committees in the regions and have the same functions and powers as in the regions of WHR and EN to achieve justice and equality.

The same goes for the cumulative terms served by members of the Governing Councils, it is imperative for any member who has completed their term according to the old Governance policies does not return as a representative of their association or as a consultant to the Board of Trustees, thus ensuring justice and transparency.

Accordingly, evaluating whether to participate in the procedures of the General Assembly meeting in India or not will depend on the way that the current reports will be amended and will also depend on clarifying the mechanisms of conducting the meeting, as well as the voting and decision-making mechanisms at the General Assembly in India. And all of this has to be sent to us and clarified prior to the meeting to make an informed decision on the participation in the meeting. Following that, ensuring that the democratically elected Governing Council will play the role for which it was elected.

Once again, we thank all those who contributed to the preparation of the reports, and all those who contributed to commenting on them, as well as anyone who will contribute to changing the content of the current reports to include the comments of all the regions and the Federation's Member Associations.

Copy:

- President of IPPF
- International Treasurer
- Members of the Regional Council