

## IPPF'S CONSULTATION RESPONSE TO WORLD BANK GROUP DRAFT GENDER STRATEGY

*The World Bank Group is committed to supporting countries in their efforts to reduce poverty and promote more equitable societies. In this context, what are key gender gaps the World Bank Group should focus on to support countries in implementing these goals?*

### **1) The WBG's Gender Strategy requires a more holistic approach to achieving substantive gender equality within the context of reducing poverty and promoting equality**

IPPF welcomes the World Bank Group's (referred to as the WBG) concept note on *'Promoting Gender Equality to Reduce Poverty and Boost Shared Prosperity'* (referred to as the Gender Strategy) which is currently open for consultation until July 2015. The Gender Strategy presents opportunities for the WBG to scale up and consolidate its work on gender, such that substantive gender equality<sup>1</sup> is prioritized and mainstreamed robustly across all of the WBG's work.

While IPPF welcomes the emphasis for the Gender Strategy to link to the twin goals of the WBG (ending poverty and increasing shared prosperity), we are concerned that the narrow focus of the WBG's Gender strategy on women's economic empowerment is limited in its scope and analysis. Its emphasis on creating more and better jobs for women and increasing women's access to productive assets focuses on limited aspects of women's economic empowerment and equality. This approach does not reflect adequately the human rights of girls and women as deeply intertwined and indivisible. It views women's access to jobs and assets in isolation from the wide range of structural inequalities that limit women's economic empowerment. It consequently neglects core social determinants of gender equality, such as health, that are not only women's human rights in and of themselves, but impact on the economic opportunities and equality of women worldwide. IPPF is concerned that the WBG's approach risks deprioritizing other core development interventions that directly support women's empowerment and economic rights, including interventions and programming on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR).

In order to support countries in reducing poverty and promoting equality, it is important that the WBP adopts an approach to substantive gender equality that considers not only the differential economic opportunities and assets available to women and girls, but understands the structural inequalities that deny women the realization of their full range of rights. They include but are not limited to:

- Health, particularly in relation to the realization of SRHR;
- Sexual and Gender-Based Violence;
- Education, including availability of comprehensive sexuality education;
- The disproportionate unpaid care burdens that women face worldwide;
- The impact of macroeconomic policies on women's access to decent work; and,
- Women's participation and decision-making across public and political life.

**IPPF recommends that the WBG Gender Strategy addresses the wide range of structural inequalities that persist across social, economic, public and political life and curtail women's rights and limit their empowerment. In particular, IPPF recommends that the WBG Gender Strategy should explicitly address and prioritize women's health, specifically SRHR, as the denial of such rights perpetuates cycles of poverty and gender inequality and impacts**

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<sup>1</sup> *'Substantive equality'* includes equality of opportunity as well as equality of outcomes. The foundational definition taken from the Convention of Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) prohibits discriminatory treatment (direct discrimination) as well as discriminatory outcomes (indirect discrimination); it also precludes discrimination that is intended (purposive) as well as unintended (discrimination in effect).

**negatively on all other aspects of women's lives, including their economic empowerment and equality.**

## **2) Women's economic equality and empowerment cannot be achieved without investing in SRHR**

IPPF is concerned that the current WBG Gender Strategy does not pay attention to the health of women and in particular, their SRHR, within the context of reducing poverty and inequality and empowering women economically. Although the WBG Gender Strategy acknowledges the denial of SRHR as a key constraint to women's employment, disappointingly, it does not identify SRHR as a key lever of change within the strategy.

Much policy attention in recent years has been given to gender equality as '*smart economics*' by multilaterals, including the WBG. Much of the donor discourse on women's economic empowerment over the last twenty years has focused on integrating women into the market economy, and raising the income of individual women often through jobs or micro-credit programmes.<sup>2</sup> While useful, this response has not substantially increased women's economic empowerment for a number of reasons. Firstly, income, although important, is not enough. Women's economic empowerment requires an increase in control over their income and household finances, and greater influence in economic decision making at every level. Upgrading women's choices over the quality of work they do, and how they spend their time, are also essential components. The realization of SRHR is key to these choices. The extent to which women's increased entry into the labor force may be empowering, depends on the context, the reasons for women's economic participation, the existence of regulatory frameworks to support women's economic participation, and the type and conditions of the work.

For women and girls to lead healthy lives, and to be free to participate in social, economic and political life, they need universal access to quality services, supplies, information and education, and conditions that allow them to realize their sexual and reproductive rights. On these grounds alone, SRHR must be considered priority development interventions.

Moreover, the WBG's Gender Strategy does not address the quality and conditions of women's work sufficiently. For example, simply increasing women's access to jobs and assets will not necessarily respond to the disproportionate care burdens that women and girls face, or the quality and conditions and valuing of women's work, nor will it address inequality that women face in decision making within the household about economic decisions.

Although the percentage of women working in formal wage employment worldwide has increased steadily over the past half century, women around the globe are still more likely to work in the informal economy. Work in the informal economy tends to be more insecure and offers fewer benefits than work in the formal wage economy, with specific effects on SRHR such as greater vulnerability to sexual harassment and violence.

The link between women's economic stability and that of their families and communities is one of the reasons that livelihood programmes such as employment guarantees, infrastructure projects and micro-finance have often been targeted at women. While livelihood programmes such as micro-finance have long been promoted as a way to increase women's economic participation, research suggests that providing women with access to income without access to support mechanisms and other infrastructure may not lead to economic empowerment. For example, women's involvement in these projects does not necessarily result in their empowerment, and may indeed increase women's care burden.<sup>3</sup>

The SRHR and unpaid care work of women should be taken into consideration in gender transformative programming on women's economic participation by ensuring that child care and health needs are considered in programme design and implementation. Evaluations highlight the importance of considering women's care work in infrastructure projects, as evidence suggests that certain infrastructure programmes can increase women's economic empowerment, while others can increase

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<sup>2</sup> Gender and Development Network (2015). *Turning Promises into Progress: Gender equality and rights for women and girls - lessons learnt and actions needed*

<sup>3</sup> Division for the Advancement of Women (2009) *World Survey on the Role of Women in Development: Women's Control over Economic Resources and Access to Financial Resources, Including Microfinance*. Available at Accessed 15 January 2015.

their care work burden.<sup>4</sup> Research finds that public works programmes could have gender transformative potential were they to provide child care and if they promote social infrastructure such as schools and clinics.<sup>5</sup>

**IPPF recommends that the WBG must include SRHR in its interventions on women's economic empowerment in order to support women's access to decent work and assets.**

### **3) Supporting women into decent work requires shifting the burden of unpaid care**

The WBG Gender Strategy does not pay enough attention to the 'enabling environment' or the non-economic barriers to economic equality, such as legal constraints and discriminatory social norms around 'women's work' and unpaid care that justify low pay, limit organizing, and reinforce occupational segregation.<sup>6</sup>

The level of care work women face affects women's access to sexual and reproductive health services, both in terms of time burdens as well as practical barriers that directly limit their access to critical services. The reverse is true as well: without access to essential sexual and reproductive health services such as family planning, women cannot choose if and when and how many children to have. This can, in turn, increase their care burden and exacerbate already existing inequalities in women's share of care-giving, as well as the health and economic consequences that result from unplanned and/or frequent pregnancies, such as unsafe abortions.

Increasing women's paid employment may have unintended consequences if the unpaid care they provide is not replaced by publically provided care services. For example, girls may be taken out of school to take on caring responsibilities or women may experience yet a further decrease in their time as they try to combine caring responsibilities with paid work. Economic empowerment, particularly for the most marginalized women, requires investment in social infrastructure, essential services and social protection.<sup>7</sup> As noted by UN Women, "*unpaid care and domestic work severely limits women's economic opportunities. Recognizing the economic value of this work...redistributing it more equality women and men, and between households and society, is critical for the achievement of substantive equality*".<sup>8</sup>

Given the benefits of child care and other support programmes, and the fact that women will continue to work in both the formal and informal economy, support for care work remains extremely important to women's economic empowerment, and to the health and well-being of women and their families. Access to support systems that are traditionally found only in the formal market is a key part of the story – for many regions and in many economies, the bulk of jobs for women are likely to remain in the informal sector. SRHR must be integrated into regulatory frameworks to support women's work, including their care work. In turn, rights delivered through such frameworks must reach women in both the informal and formal economies. These frameworks should be in line with internationally agreed standards.<sup>9</sup> **IPPF recommends that the WBG Gender Strategy should prioritize support for women's care work and regulatory frameworks that support and promote universal access to SRHR, across both the informal and formal economy to help women access decent work, become healthier and more economically stable.**

### **4) The WBG must ensure that its approach to women's economic equality and empowerment is rights based**

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<sup>4</sup> Kabeer N (2013) Paid Work, Women's Empowerment and Inclusive Growth: Transforming the Structures of Constraint. UN Women.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Tornqvist, A. and Schmitz, C. (2009) Women's economic empowerment: scope for Sida's engagement, Working Paper. Stockholm: SIDA, available at: <http://www.enterprisedevelopment.org/download.ashx?id=1524> p.10

<sup>7</sup> Gender and Development Network (2015). *Turning Promises into Progress: Gender equality and rights for women and girls - lessons learnt and actions needed.*

<sup>8</sup> UN Women (2015) Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016. Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights. Pg. 69

<sup>9</sup> For example, the International Labour Organization Maternity Protection Convention, 2000 (No 183), its accompanying Recommendation (No 191) and the Workers with Family Responsibilities Convention, 1981 (No 156), as well as internationally agreed rights obligations, such as the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, which includes an article on anti-discrimination (article 2, 2) and an article on the right of everyone to the enjoyment of the highest attainable standard of physical and mental health (article 12,1), as well as progressive immigration policies.

Key multilateral agencies such as UN Women acknowledge that while a variety of actors including bilateral and multilateral agencies have embraced the need for women's economic empowerment, not all pathways to economic development advance gender equality.<sup>10</sup> UN Women notes that some patterns of economic growth are premised on maintaining gender inequalities in conditions of work and earnings and enforcing unequal patterns of unpaid work that consign women to the domestic sphere.<sup>11</sup>

A greater understanding is needed of the interrelationship between economic policies and gender equality, followed by acknowledgement of the issues caused by current growth models and the development of alternative models.<sup>12</sup> This would include, for example, recognition of the different impact of all policies – including taxation, trade and investment – on women and men with measures to promote gender equality and ensure that women are not disadvantaged.<sup>13</sup> It would also include a greater commitment to the provision of high quality public services, accepting the responsibility of governments to provide care rather than depend on the invisible, unremunerated provision by women within households and communities.<sup>14</sup>

Women's economic empowerment initiatives will only succeed if they are located within a broader transformation of the power relations which govern economic resources, removing the gender bias that systematically disadvantages women.<sup>15</sup> This will require lasting change in economic decision making, and in the distribution of, access to, and control over resources in favor of women who are marginalized and living in poverty.<sup>16</sup>

As noted by UN women, economic and social policies need to work in tandem to support substantive equality. Although the role of economic policies is primarily viewed in terms of promoting economic growth and social policies are seen to address poverty, disadvantage and reducing inequality, there are alternative routes to this binary model. Macroeconomic policies can advance gender equality through redistributive measures that increase employment, productivity and aggregate demand.<sup>17</sup> Ultimately, it is important to create a virtuous cycle through generating decent work and gender-responsive social protection and social services, alongside enabling macroeconomic policies that prioritize investment in women.<sup>18</sup> **IPPF recommends that the WBG employs a rights based approach to addressing women's economic equality, including supporting macroeconomic policies that advance women's rights.**

*What are examples of policies approaches and programs (either by the public or private sector) that have helped remove economic and social constraints to women and girls and that the World Bank Group strategy could learn from?*

### **1) Invest in the public sector as both a service provider and key employer of women**

The public sector is an important source of jobs, as well as providing services that benefit both the economy and society more broadly.<sup>19</sup> Women working in the public sector are concentrated in health, education and care services, which both support and reduce women's unpaid care and domestic work. The public sector has historically been an important source of formal wage employment for women, providing decent pay, good employment conditions, job security and pension contributions linked to high levels of unionization and opportunities for collective bargaining.<sup>20</sup> The public sector can play an important role in setting and advancing standards for gender equality policies for the private sector.

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<sup>10</sup> UN Women (2015) Progress of the World's Women 2015-2016. Transforming Economies, Realizing Rights. Pg. 69

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Gender and Development Network (2015). *Turning Promises into Progress: Gender equality and rights for women and girls - lessons learnt and actions needed*

<sup>13</sup> Gender and Development Network (2015). *Turning Promises into Progress: Gender equality and rights for women and girls - lessons learnt and actions needed*

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

<sup>16</sup> Srilatha, B. (2012) What does transforming economic power mean? One of a series of articles addressing themes for discussion at the 12th AWID International Forum, 'Transforming Economic Power to advance women's rights and justice', available at: <http://www.opendemocracy.net/5050/srilatha-batliwala/what-does-transforming-economic-power-mean>

<sup>17</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

<sup>18</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

<sup>19</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

<sup>20</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

However, women employed in the public sector tend to be clustered in junior and lower-paying positions as well as in feminized sectors such as education and health. Moreover, austerity policies as a result of the global economic crisis have led to a sharp downward trend in public sector employment; this has disproportionately hurt women as they depend on public services more and are more likely to be employed by the public sector.

Scaling up public services to achieve women's rights will require the creation of new jobs. Globally 10.3 million additional health workers are required to ensure the effective delivery of universal health care and this presents a major opportunity to create decent employment for women in these sectors.<sup>21</sup> Capitalizing on this opportunity would be beneficial in more ways than one. It would provide support for women's well-being as well as employment and wider economic benefits.

**IPPF recommends that expanding public sector employment for women can make a significant contribution to substantive equality. Well-resourced public services have the potential to support and reduce women's unpaid care work and meet their sexual and reproductive health needs, as well as providing good quality jobs for women.**

*In your experience, what are the best examples of policies and programs that have created access to better jobs for both women and men? What made these work?*

### **1) Regulatory frameworks to support SRHR and gender equality**

Provisions for maternity leave and child care are primary elements of any policy attempt to draw women into the formal economy in a substantial and empowering way. For example, in Guatemala City, the introduction of community day care increased the income of mothers by 30 per cent and made them more likely to be employed in the formal sector. Importantly, the greatest beneficiaries of this programme were women and older women with lower levels of education.<sup>22</sup> In rural Colombia, community day care had positive impacts on women's labor participation, as well as benefits for children's well-being, while a pre-school programme in Argentina increased women's employment by 7–14 per cent.<sup>23</sup> The reasons for these outcomes vary according to region. However, it is important to note that due to a number of factors in many economies (such as the number and type of formal sector jobs available), women's share of the informal sector is unlikely to experience major shifts in the near future, regardless of availability of support for care work. Given the benefits of child care and other support programmes, and the fact that women will continue to work in both the formal and informal economy, **IPPF recommends that the WBG prioritize support for care work as it remains extremely important to women's economic empowerment, and to the health and well-being of women and their families.**

### **2) Invest in gender-responsive social services, including the full range of integrated sexual and reproductive health services**

Gender responsive public services are essential for the realization of women's rights and the achievement of substantive equality.<sup>24</sup> IPPF's experience shows that when women and girls have access to critical life-saving services, including commodities and information, and when they are able to make meaningful choices about their life path, their quality of life improves, as does the well-being of their families and the communities in which they live.

The need for sexual and reproductive health services is evident. Poor sexual and reproductive health outcomes represent one-third of the total global burden of disease for women between the ages of 15 and 44 years, with unsafe sex a major risk factor for death and disability among women and girls in low- and middle-income countries.<sup>25</sup> Globally, the single leading risk factor for death and disability in women

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<sup>21</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

<sup>22</sup> Todd P (2013) How to Improve Women's Employability and Quality of Work in Transition Economies. Research analysis produced for UNF. Available at Accessed 18 September 2014. See also UNDP and International Labour Organization (2009) Work and Family: Towards New Forms of Reconciliation with Social Co-responsibility. Women in Guatemala City cited lack of child care as the number one reason that they did not work in the formal sector.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> World Health Organization (2014) Women and Health: 20 Years of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. Executive Board EB136/18, 136th session, 24 December 2014. Provisional agenda item 7.4. Available at Accessed 14 January 2015.

of reproductive age in low- and middle-income countries is unsafe sex, mainly due to HIV, and to maternal mortality.<sup>26</sup> Globally, one in three women experiences either intimate partner violence or non-partner sexual violence during their lifetime.<sup>27</sup> The sexual and reproductive health of women and girls is important but also affects other aspects of their lives, such as their ability to stay in school, to live free from violence and to participate economically.

It is important that public services are responsive to the needs and realities of women, such that they support opportunities for women to access decent work. For example, in Bangladesh, one of the first countries where a large percentage of women found employment in the wage economy in the family planning and health sector, women have not only been able to gain economic empowerment, but also to challenge gender norms through their work.<sup>28</sup>

Another example is the work the IPPF Member Association, the Reproductive Health Association of Cambodia (RHAC), is undertaking in Cambodia with young women working in factories. These women often do not know where to go for sexual and reproductive health services and, for many, the services remain inaccessible due to cost or limited opening hours. RHAC is responding to this unmet need by providing information and free services to women working in factories and has established formal partnerships with 30 factories in three major urban areas of Cambodia. RHAC staff deliver interactive and entertaining events at lunchtimes to provide information on sexual and reproductive health, including HIV. The factory workers are given vouchers that they can redeem at RHAC clinics for a range of free sexual and reproductive health services including contraception, post-abortion care, cervical cancer screening and treatment, HIV counselling and testing, referrals for antiretroviral treatment, and testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections. Since the women work six days a week in the factories, RHAC has adapted its clinic hours to ensure it is open on Sundays during the workers' time off. For those factories that have on-site clinics to treat workplace injuries and minor illnesses, RHAC has provided training to the factory clinic staff on health education, client rights, basic clinical skills, providing information about contraception and testing for sexually transmitted infections. RHAC is developing plans to upgrade these factory clinics to provide more services on site.

**IPPF recommends that the WBG invests in gender responsive services that meet the sexual and reproductive health needs of women and supports their access to decent work.**

*How can the World Bank Group better support countries and companies in their efforts to strengthen their systems and institutions with respect to gender equality to yield more sustainable results?*

### **1) Measure the things that matters**

Accurate disaggregated data are critical for informing policies and advancing gender equality. These data give us a better picture of what progress has been made and can encourage political will to act on areas where progress is stalling. Beyond disaggregating data by sex, measuring data by wealth quintile can reveal inequalities within countries, which are often masked. Another example of a need for disaggregated data includes the lack of available data for young people between the ages of 10 and 14 years. Despite the United Nations definition of 'adolescent' as anyone between the ages of 10 and 19, most of the internationally comparable statistics and estimates that are available on adolescent pregnancies or births cover only part of the cohort – ages 15 to 19. Increasing the capacity to produce reliable, accurate and timely statistics, in particular gender statistics, remains a formidable challenge for many countries. Moreover, developing metrics to measure concepts such as the empowerment of girls and women can be technically challenging and contentious among experts. **IPPF recommends that the WBG must prioritize greater investment and effort to fill knowledge gaps and collect robust data and should work with governments and companies to increase data collection, disaggregated by sex and age, on SRHR.**

<sup>26</sup> World Health Organization (2009) Women and Health, Today's Evidence, Tomorrow's Agenda. Available at Accessed 15 January 2015.

<sup>27</sup> World Health Organization (2013) Intimate Partner and Sexual Violence Against Women. Fact sheet no 239. Available at Accessed 14 January 2015.

<sup>28</sup> 89 Mahmud S and Sultan M (2010) Community Health Workers as Agents of Change. Pathways of Empowerment. Available at Accessed 15 January 2015.

## 2) Strong systems of accountability

It is important that that the Regional Gender Action Plans, as well as the Country Gender Assessments, are underpinned by strong systems of accountability. While respecting the principle of country ownership, IPPF recommends the involvement of civil society in both the design and implementation of Country Gender Assessments and Regional plans. **IPPF recommends that there is a robust system underpinning both regional and country plans that monitors progress against core gender indicators, including indicators relating to the range of SRHR.** This requires transparency on the part of the WBG, donor community and national governments to collect and monitor timely and relevant data. **IPPF recommends that the WBG collects, disaggregates and analyses data on its own impact on gender equality and sexual and reproductive health.**

## 3) Gender-responsive budgeting

Gender-responsive budgeting is a widely applied approach that aims to guide the formulation of fiscal and budgetary policies to enhance gender equality outcomes. Gender-responsive budgeting involves analysis of the gender-specific impacts of the allocation of public spending, taxation and public service delivery using sex-disaggregated data on the beneficiaries of different categories of spending or service provision and on the incidence of taxation.<sup>29</sup> A gender analysis of national budgets should also, ideally, examine fiscal policy at the aggregate level: total spending, total revenues and deficit financing. **IPPF recommends that the WBG supports governments to use gender-responsive budgeting to guide revenue mobilization and spending decisions.**

*What are the important knowledge gaps – areas where you feel that we don't know enough and the World Bank Group should prioritize in its work to help close gender gaps?*

### 1) More evidence on links between SRHR and women's economic empowerment and equality

Policy focus and attention given to gender equality and women's empowerment has been growing over the last decade, and there are some areas where links are established more conclusively. Although there is strong documentation on the health benefits of investment in sexual and reproductive health, until recently the non-medical benefits, have been largely ignored, partly because they are difficult to measure.<sup>30</sup> While the social and economic implications of SRHR are often overlooked, they are no less real. More attention and priority is needed to explore the links between SRHR and other critical areas relating to gender equality, including women's economic empowerment and equality. It is critical that that policy is evidence-informed, rights-based and reinforces measures to promote, protect and fulfil sexual and reproductive rights and achieve gender equality. **IPPF recommends that the WBG, as a key influencer within the global donor community, prioritizes SRHR within its research, policy and practice and within its strategic aims of reducing poverty and inequality.**

*Any other comment or suggestion that you may have.*

### 1) Ensuring safeguards and accountability in relation to private sector engagement

While acknowledging the need to ensure a mix of financing mechanisms in delivering SRH services and advancing gender equality, the WBG's engagement with the private sector must be rights-based and equitable. **IPPF recommends that legal and regulatory safeguards and pathways of accountability are in place when WBG lending involves the private sector, to guarantee corporate accountability of private sector involvement in the funding and delivery of programming and service delivery. IPPF recommends that the WBG undertakes robust gender impact assessments before recommending private sector engagement in its work.**

In particular, IPPF is concerned about the weight given within the Gender Strategy to engage the International Financial Corporation (IFC) in advancing gender equality. This is particularly poignant in light of recent reports of gross violations of human rights through IFC lending.<sup>31</sup> **IPPF recommends that the WBG ensures that robust policies are in place when financing is mobilized through its**

<sup>29</sup> UN Women (2015). Op. cit.

<sup>30</sup> Cohen SA (2004) The broad benefits of investing in sexual and reproductive health. The Guttmacher Report on Public Policy. 7(1). Available at Accessed 14 January 2015.

<sup>31</sup> "Billions in "out of control" IFC investments into third-parties causing human rights abuses around the world" Oxfam Press Release (2015). Available at: <https://www.oxfam.org/en/pressroom/pressreleases/2015-04-02/billions-out-control-ifc-investments-third-parties-causing-human-rights-abuses>

**private sector arm, the International Finance Corporation (IFC), to ensure that human rights protections are in place, particularly when subsidiary companies are employed to deliver health services.**

## **2) Making the links between the WBG's Gender Strategy and the priorities of WBG Global Practices**

It is important that the Gender Strategy reflects the priorities of the WBG's Global Practices as they relate to gender. Where Global Practices are championing and investing in priorities that relate to gender equality, we would expect to see these thematic areas (e.g. women's health) given some level of priority within the Gender Strategy.

IPPF is disappointed that more attention is not given to women's health, specifically SRHR, within the Gender Strategy. This is particularly pertinent given the level of prioritization women's health has been given within the Health, Nutrition and Population (HNP) Global Practice.

## **2) Political will and leadership on SRHR**

There are key areas related to women's human rights that have been neglected historically by the donor community. Donor support for family planning declined significantly in the 1990s, reaching an all-time low of US\$394 million in 2006, increasing slightly to US\$462 million in 2007.<sup>32</sup> Funding gaps have remained a persistent problem. The gap between needs and available resources for family planning is growing.

The International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) held in Cairo in 1994 recognized the interrelationships between human sexuality and gender relations. Over the past two decades, this has been followed by an increasing understanding of women's SRHR as a central pillar in achieving human rights, reducing poverty and attaining gender equality. This has been reflected in commitments at the global level, such as at events including ICPD+5, ICPD+10 and the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV and AIDS in 2006.<sup>33</sup> In October 2007, the target of universal access to reproductive health was added to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 5, for improving maternal health. More recently, there has been welcome interest by organizations such as the World Health Organization (WHO) and global partnerships such as Family Planning 2020, in promoting and supporting a rights-based approach to family planning. It is important that SRHR are championed by key influencers such as the WBG as important rights in and of themselves as well as critical to all aspects of women's human rights.

**There are unique opportunities for the WBG's Gender Strategy to open up opportunities to regenerate commitment, and recharge political will and support for SRHR. IPPF recommends that the WBG champions SRHR as important rights in themselves, as well as critical to empowering women and girls and for achieving gender equality.**

### **About us:**

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is a global service provider and leading advocate of sexual and reproductive health and rights for all. We are a worldwide movement of national organizations working with and for communities and individuals. For our recent work on the World Bank see here:

<http://www.ippf.org/news/World-Bank-investment-reproductive-health>

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<sup>32</sup> Population Action International (2007) Achieving Universal Access cited in Duebber, R. & Hyde, S., (2014) A Manifesto for Motherhood: Achieving Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn and Child Health: from Commitment to Action, Women and Children, available from: <http://www.healthpovertyaction.org/wpcontent/uploads/downloads/2012/07/Manifesto-for-Motherhood-Briefing-Pack.pdf>, p. 9

<sup>33</sup> See website of the International Conference on Population and Development, available at: [www.icpdbeyond2014.org](http://www.icpdbeyond2014.org)