

Submission of input for an Elements Paper on Financing for Development on behalf of IPPF

The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) welcomes the opportunity to submit its input for an elements paper which will put forward potential elements of the outcome document of the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development.

Background

1. Mainstreaming gender equality and human rights

Mainstreaming gender equality and human rights, including sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), in the outcome document for the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development (FfD4) is essential to ensure that global efforts in financing for development effectively contribute to an inclusive and equitable economic system.

2. Achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls

Integrated approaches are necessary to accelerate the achievement of gender equality by addressing poverty, promoting social protection, strengthening institutions and sustained financing with a gender perspective.

Progress is still weak on aligning macro and micro economic measures with gender equality, with only one in four countries having a comprehensive gender-responsive budgeting system. Financial inclusion has improved over the past decade. However, gender and location continue to affect access to financial services and access to long-term finance remains a challenge, especially for small and medium-sized enterprises in developing countries. The gender gap in account ownership remains significant: in 2021, 78 per cent of men and 74 per cent of women had access to financial services.

Gender equality must be a central focus in the allocation of financial resources, policymaking, and institutional reform to create sustainable economic and social systems that empower women as key contributors to development.

As the global community endures in their effort to achieve SDG5 for Gender Equality, it is crucial to recognise the role of root causes of gender inequalities and poverty, such as the multiple, intersecting and systemic forms of discrimination faced by women and girls; including with regards to the lack of access to SRHR.

3. Promoting and protecting sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR)

SRHR is a vital component of both gender equality and the international human rights frameworks, enabling individuals to make informed decisions about their bodies, health, and lives. The realization of SRHR is also fundamental for achieving sustainable development. It is intrinsically linked to Sustainable Development Goals 5 (gender equality), and contributes to achieving all other SDGs, particularly SDG 3 (health and well-being), SDG 4 (quality education), and SDG 10 (reduced inequalities).

Access to SRHR is not only a health issue but also remains a key pillar in support to women economic empowerment. It is an essential component to achieve women's ability to participate fully in the workforce, complete their education, and make decisions about their lives and futures.

Despite the great contribution of SRHR to broader gender equality objectives, in enhancing women's economic opportunities, social inclusion, and leadership roles, persistent gaps in financing, governance, and institutional frameworks are still hindering progress, particularly for marginalized groups.

Efforts to close these gaps must be integrated into global financial reforms, ensuring that the global financial architecture is responsive to the unique needs of women and girls and that these reforms are aligned with existing global commitments and conclusions such as the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population (ICPD), Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, as well as the agreed conclusions of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women (2024).

These frameworks emphasize the need for gender-transformative policies and financing systems that address the structural barriers hindering women's empowerment. This is particularly important as the outcome document for FFD4 will be adopted in the context of the 30th anniversary of the Programme of Action of the ICPD and the Beijing Platform for Action. These landmark frameworks have been instrumental in advancing gender equality and women's rights globally. The inclusion of SRHR in the outcome document will therefore reaffirm the international community's commitment to these agreements, ensuring that they remain central to the financing for development agenda and that progress made over the past three decades continues to be built upon in a way that benefits all, especially the most vulnerable.

4. General suggestions

Therefore, we call on the co-facilitators of the FFD4 outcome document and on Member States to ensure that the interlinkages between SRHR and financing for gender equality are made clear in the next outcome document of the Conference. This presents a catalytic potential for the empowerment of all women and girls. including references to SRHR, the outcome document will ensure that comprehensive care, education, and services remain at the forefront of global health and development initiatives, supporting individuals in making informed choices that impact their well-being and overall development.

Overall, we recommend that the FFD4 outcome document:

- promotes reforms in international financial architecture that align with the principles of gender equality and human rights, ensuring sustainable and equitable development outcomes.
- recognizes universal access to SRHR) for all women and girls as a cornerstone for economic empowerment.
- promotes gender-responsive budgeting and financing strategies across all sectors to facilitate comprehensive support for women's health and economic participation.
- encourages partnerships among governments, private sectors, and civil society to foster innovative financing solutions that address the unique challenges faced by women and girls, particularly those from marginalized communities.

In line with the UNSG report (A/79/285), we recommend that FFD4 would establish more robust accountability mechanisms for delivering effective gender-responsive budgeting.

Key recommendations

Below are specific recommendations against the action areas of the Addis Ababa Action Agenda that the outcome document of the International Financing for Development conference should include:

I. A global financing framework

- Recognise the importance of SRHR as a fundamental to any strategy aimed at reducing gender inequality and enhancing women's economic opportunities.
- Develop a new global financing framework that incorporates universal access to SRHR as a necessary requirement to ensure women and girls can fully participate in economic development initiatives.
- Commit to strengthen the commitments of the Addis Ababa Agenda 2015 to gender equality, and to commit to gender-transformative financing at global level as a foundation for economic and social development.
- Include references and commitments included in the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action, the agreed conclusion of the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women.

II. Action areas

a. Domestic public resources

- Recognise the importance of gender-transformative fiscal policies and tax policies that are fair transparent, progressive and have fair distribution of tax burden, address both formal and informal sectors, ensuring that women's right are promoted and protected regardless of their employment status.
- Implement gender-responsive budgeting frameworks at national and international level, ensuring that domestic resources allocations are targeted towards reducing inequalities and supporting the SRHR needs of women facing different and intersecting forms of discrimination.
- Support the ongoing work at the UN Committee of Experts on International Cooperation in Tax Matters, in the UN Framework Convention on International Taxation Cooperation (UNFCITC).
- Commit to implement its results, to create a more inclusive and gender transformative global tax system that supports all countries to increase and best use their domestic public resources.
- Adjust fiscal incentives through gender equality lens, by strengthening national and international policy environments and regulatory frameworks.

b. Domestic and international private business and finance

- Encourage all sectors, including the private sector businesses to incorporate SRHR in their policies, supporting women's access to comprehensive healthcare and full participation to workplace.
- Enhance gender-transformative corporate practices to reduce inequalities and foster economic inclusion.
- Enhance policies that encourage transparent, open-data financing models that prioritise SRHR and gender quality in domestic and international investments, directing development funds towards initiatives that boost economic opportunities for women and marginalised groups.

c. International development cooperation

- Guarantee the fulfilment of the ODA Commitments and increase the share of ODA that is effectively disbursed in developing countries, particularly supporting the promotion of gender equality.

- Prioritise SRHR in global financing as an agent that directly contribute to closing gender gaps, improving access to essential SRHR services for women and girls and other diverse and marginalized communities.
- Support, promote and fund local feminist organisations to enable and strengthen their work. Feminist organizations are at the forefront of actions to achieve gender equality and are in a unique position to understand the SRHR needs of women and girls in local communities and the intersectionality of these needs.
- Invest in existing multilateral funds dedicated to gender equality with established records in effectively reaching local women's rights and feminist organisations with funding that is flexible and responsive to their needs.
- Encourage discussions on innovative methods to measure the multi-dimensionality of effective development finance which should not be limited to the per capita income could include a new index beyond GDP that accounts for the contributions of the care and bio-preservation economies.

d. International trade as an engine for development

- Recognise the importance of empowering women in trade by investing in capacity-building initiative and programmes.
- Commit to include provisions that protect and promote SRHR in trade policies, particularly for women in vulnerable industries.
- Commit to reduce gender gaps in trade, including to boost sustainable economic growth, given that women tend to reinvest a greater share of their income in their families and communities.
- Commit to have gender-disaggregated data including those related to the care economy while creating or strengthen such databases to guide the formulation and implementation of gender-effective trade policies.
- Establish effective monitoring mechanisms, both at the national level and with the support of international organizations to assess the impact of trade policies from women, including in their SRHR.

e. Debt and debt sustainability

- Recognise that countries current debt status undermines ability to fund SRHR and gender equality. Debt relief initiatives and debt crisis prevention, including through sound debt management and transparency, should be linked to investments in gender equality and SRHR initiatives that empower women and girls economically. This is even more relevant in heavily indebted countries where fiscal space for social services is limited.
- Support countries emerging from debt crises to get the support to reinvest in the SDGs, particularly food security, health, education, and social protection systems, with a focus on addressing the specific needs of women and girls, finding solutions for countries that face severe fiscal constraints, debt overhangs and insufficient reforms to address underlying problems and to foster inclusive growth.

f. Addressing systemic issues

- Reinforce the need to reform the international financial architecture to help deliver a systemic shift towards a more inclusive, just, peaceful, resilient, and sustainable world for people and planet, for present and future generations.

- Ensure parity representation of women in all their diversity at the governance of the international financial institution and multilateral development bank reform as key for large-scale Sustainable Development Goal-related investments.
- Recognise that linkages between sexual and reproductive health and rights and poverty are one of the root causes of systemic issues. Gender-responsive transformative and financing that address the linkages between sexual and reproductive health and rights and poverty are crucial.
- Implement gender-responsive resource redistribution through recognizing the value of the informal care economy, fair fiscal and taxation policies and accessibility of direct funding to women-and- girl led groups is also key to addressing the poverty of women and girls. This can only be done by strengthening legislation, accountability frameworks and ensuring transparency, including through gender-disaggregated data.

g. Science, technology, innovation, and capacity building

- Promote the use of technology and innovation to improve access to SRHR services, particularly in underserved and remote areas, such as digital health solutions which can expand access to comprehensive sexuality education and SRHR.
- Facilitate the transfer of technology and promoting innovation in developing countries, particularly focusing on eliminating gender gaps in this field. This involves supporting gender affirmative policies for research and development, technology licensing, and capacity building in technological fields.
- Commit and reinforce the agreed conclusions of the CSW68 on communications, technology and digital spaces for women and girls.

III. Emerging issues

- Ensure financing in response to emerging global challenges, such as climate change, humanitarian crises, health, and pandemics is gender transformative. Women and girls are disproportionately affected by these crises, and financing mechanisms must be adapted to ensure that SRHR remains a priority in emergency response efforts.
- Include measures to address sexual gender-based violence (SGBV) in crisis, including financial crisis, responses and recognise how accessing SRHR is a fundamental condition to prevent and protect women from violence, particularly in emergency and humanitarian contexts.
- Acknowledge increasing and diverse financing needs of countries, especially those particularly vulnerable to the adverse impacts of climate change, who disproportionately affects women and marginalized population, leading to a growing demand for grants and concessional finance. Climate finance must be additional, grant-based, distinct from ODA and should not come at the expense of assistance for other development needs, including poverty eradication, which continue to be a major issue for women and girls, worldwide.

IV. Data, monitoring, and follow-up

- Commit to create a robust monitoring mechanism to ensure transparency and accountability in the financing of gender equality and SRHR initiatives.
- Commit to strengthen global gender-sensitive data systems to track SRHR outcomes, ensuring that financing for gender equality and SRHR is properly allocated and its impact measured. Data collection should focus on marginalized groups, providing evidence for targeted interventions.

- Enhance systems in which countries develop national budgets that include gender-disaggregated data. This will enable governments and donors to track the impact of their investments on gender equality and SRHR, ensuring that commitments lead to tangible results.
- Maintain the Inter-Agency Task Force’s reporting system and encourage the development of comprehensive quantitative FfD indicators, including with gender perspective, to strengthen the follow-up of FfD4 within the framework of ECOSOC.

V. Overarching reflections

- Recognise universal access to SRHR as a precondition for economic inclusion, women empowerment and gender equality and recognise how the Financing for Development conference presents an unprecedented opportunity to recognise this in all financial frameworks. And ensure investments in SRHR and gender quality are boosted as a key strategy to achieve sustainable development goals.
- Recognise how the conference represents a platform to encourage partnerships among governments, private sectors, and civil society to foster innovative financing solutions that address the unique challenges faced by women and girls, particularly those from marginalized communities.

Resources

ECOSOC (2015). [Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development](#)

UNDESA (2024). [Financing for Sustainable Development Report 2024](#)

UN (2024). Commission on the status of Women 68th Session Agreed Conclusions ([E/CN.6/2024/L.3](#))

IPPF, Countdown 2030 Europe (2024). Key Messages for the 68th Session of the Commission on the Status of Women

Countdown 2030 Europe (2023). [SRHR in international cooperation in 2023. What is changed since last year?](#)

CONCORD (2023). [Funding local women’s rights organisations and feminist movements for transformative change Recommendations to the EU and Member States.](#)

IIED (2021). [Gender concerns in debt relief](#)

UNFPA (2024). [Advancing Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights in the Private Sector](#)

World Bank (2023). [Leveraging Gender Data to Accelerate Gender Equality](#)

C20 – Civil Society 20 (2024). [General Recommendations for the 3rd G20 Sherpas Meeting](#)