A. Introduction

1. The International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF) is an international non-governmental organization implementing programmes to improve sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) of all with a focus on poor, under-served and vulnerable populations in over 173 countries. Today as a federation of 161 nationally owned and managed community-based Member Associations (MAs) and partners, **IPPF is the largest global non-governmental family planning service provider in the world**. All of IPPF’s services are rights-based, gender-sensitive, client-centred, evidence based, stigma-free and universally acceptable. IPPF contributes to the SRHR of all people by:
   a) increasing access and choice through provision of integrated sexual and reproductive health services, information and education;
   b) contributing to strengthening health systems; and
   c) advocating to change policy and laws in support of sexual and reproductive health.

2. IPPF welcomes the UK government’s initiative to develop a coherent approach to international development by looking beyond aid and focusing on the missing issues from the MDGs. We also would like to compliment the International Development Committee’s initiative to engage with the civil society through this request to submit written evidence.

B. Coherence of policies which affect development

3. This inquiry states that the future UK approach to development will focus on the missing issues from the MDGs. In doing so, IPPF recommends that DFID take political leadership and place efforts to accelerate the rate at which populations make the demographic transition to low birth and death rates at the centre of its development agenda. This is a cross-cutting issue that will have implications on all the other development issues that the UK government has identified as missing issues from the MDGs including economic growth, peace and stability, putting women and girls first and climate change. With this approach, DFID will support human rights, public health as well as sustainable, social and economic development.  

4. In what follows, IPPF provides evidence on the impact that rights-based integrated sexual and reproductive health services in developing countries can have in some of the development issues that the UK approach has outlined, namely economic growth, peace and stability, poverty alleviation, and climate change.

Economic Growth and Poverty Alleviation

5. Many of the estimated 1 billion people living in the 50-60 countries caught in “development traps” of bad governance, wasted natural resource wealth, lack of trading partners or conflict have seen only limited gains in health and well-being since 1994. It is in these countries, and among poorer populations within wealthier countries, that the status of women, maternal death, child marriage and many other concerns of the ICPD have seen minimal progress since and life expectancies continue to be unacceptably low. The threats to women’s survival are especially acute in conditions of structural poverty, owing to their lack of access to health services, particularly sexual and reproductive health services.

6. Investment in sexual and reproductive health and rights on the one hand and on women and girls on the other is one of the most successful and efficient ways to support sustainable development and reduce poverty.

7. The economic growth case for a comprehensive approach to voluntary family planning is well documented by the World Bank and other internationally recognized economists. By lowering
total fertility rates, through increased uptake of family planning, we can reduce the dependency ratios between generations and increase the proportion of working-age people in the population. When women are able to have fewer children and space their births, it allows families to invest far more into other areas of their children’s wellbeing such as education, health care and nutrition.

8. Some of the world’s top economists have recently assessed for the Copenhagen Consensus Center which targets in the post-MDG framework will do the most social good relative to their costs, and ensuring universal access to sexual and reproductive health for all was assessed as phenomenal value, with robust evidence for benefits more than 15 times higher than costs.³

Women and Girls

9. Morbidity and mortality related to SRHR disproportionately affect women and girls. Ingrained gender-based power inequalities between men and women mean that despite some progress, millions of women and girls still experience discrimination in many forms. As such, when it comes to sexual and reproductive health, women are more at risk and they are often denied the right to choose when, if and how many children they bear.

10. Empowering women and men to take personal control over their fertility and choose the number and spacing of children allow women to pursue other areas such as employment or education, which helps to end that cycle of poverty.⁴

11. IPPF welcomes the UK government’s commitment to putting girls and women at the heart of its development assistance and strongly recommends that it remains a top priority in its future approach to development.

Development and Security

12. Rapid population growth and a large, under-employed male youth population are noted by the US National Intelligence Council as determinants of political instability and radicalisation.⁵ Population growth has a major impact not only on economic growth, but on national and international security. There are growing numbers of adolescents trying to enter the labour force; however there remain huge levels of unemployment. This in turn can spark serious political instability, which ultimately has an impact on a country’s security.⁶

13. The UK government, in reshaping its development approach, should make sure that security related issues are not put ahead of those of the poorest. IPPF welcomes previous attempts to ensure that a number of legal ‘firewalls’ have been established to protect the UK’s poverty focus in its development support. A growing body of work suggests that there are significant shortcomings in the effectiveness in linking development and security in practice. Therefore a stand-alone DFID ensures that there is no breakdown of these firewalls.

14. In terms of fragile states and conflict affected countries, it is important to note that these countries contain only 20 per cent of the world’s population but account for one-third of maternal mortality and one-third of HIV cases. DFID is one of the world’s major humanitarian donors. As such, IPPF would recommend that DFID’s interventions in emergency settings should include a strong focus upon the needs of women for integrated reproductive health and comprehensive voluntary family planning services.

15. Through DFID, the UK government should also ensure that all health agencies that are working in fragile and conflict affected countries provide family planning as part of integrated package of sexual and reproductive health services including abortion and abortion-related services, HIV and AIDS and working towards reducing violence against women.

SRHR and Climate Change
16. There are an estimated 7.2 billion people currently living in the world and this is expected to increase by another 1 billion over the next 12 years, and by 2050 the world’s population is projected to increase to 9.6 billion\(^7\). The global trends vary widely between countries and there are large demographic differences, leading to a diverse set of concerns. However, regardless of the differing demographic realities, they all have global implications. Michael Herrmann, a senior advisor on Population and Economics at UNPFA has argued that the global climate will continue to change regardless of where the greenhouse gases are being emitted from and the population will continue to grow, regardless of where this is originating.\(^8\)

17. IPPF recognizes the complex, critical links between sustainable development, population dynamics, climate change and SRHR. There is wide scientific evidence that meeting the unmet need for voluntary family planning contributes to ensuring sustainable development\(^9\) and can contribute to reducing carbon emissions.\(^10\)

18. IPPF believe that it is important for DFID to invest in operations research to increase the evidence base on the relationship between climate change and population dynamics. In addition DFID should increase funding and advocacy to meet unmet demand for comprehensive, integrated sexual and reproductive health services for those populations living in regions and ecosystems most likely to be detrimentally affected by climate change.

C. A stand-alone DFID

19. Effective development cooperation requires an integrated and coherent policy framework covering political dialogue, security, trade and aid. IPPF endorses the UK government’s approach to making sustainable development the shared responsibility of all its ministries and placing policy coherence for development (PCD) at the centre of the UK development policy. This will ensure that all policies are ‘development friendly’ with clear links to internationally agreed development goals.

20. In that context, IPPF strongly supports a stand-alone Department for International Development. DFID was established specifically to ensure that UK aid was spent only on tackling global poverty and is widely recognised as one of the best development agencies, most notably topping the 2012 aid transparency index\(^11\). DFID is a leader on aid and since its creation has been extremely effective in creating opportunities to support and develop a wide arena of development work. Diverting UK aid from DFID into other agencies would be more likely to reduce the effectiveness of UK aid and its strong focus on responding to the needs of the world’s poorest and most vulnerable communities.


5 The 2004 National Intelligence Council 2020 Project, Mapping the Global Future (“NIC report”)


11 http://www.publishwhatyoufund.org/index/2012-index/