

11 September, 2023

Gender Equality, Disability and Social Inclusion Branch
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade RG Casey Building
John McEwen Crescent Barton
ACT 0221
Australia

Dear DFAT Gender Branch,

As Executive Director of Family Planning Association of Nepal (FPAN), I am pleased to make a submission to inform consultation on the DFAT International Gender Equality Strategy.

FPAN is a strong advocate for Gender Equality and sexual and reproductive rights in Nepal. We are a key government partner and trusted provider of sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services across the country, reaching around 10 million people each year and more than 85% services are taken by marginalized communities.

We appreciate DFAT's ongoing support of our work and your focus on sexual and reproductive health and rights in the country and welcome this opportunity to make a submission.

As a Member Association of the International Planned Parenthood Federation, we support the key recommendations made by IPPF in their submission to DFAT:

1. Australia should affirm its position as a strong leader and champion of sexual and reproductive health and rights as integral to the achievement of gender equality.

- *Advance sexual and reproductive health and rights within the International Gender Equality strategy, recognising it as fundamental to the achievement of Universal Health Coverage.*
- *Boldly support the adoption of policy and legislative frameworks to advance, promote, and protect sexual and reproductive health and rights for all.*
- *Ensure DFAT Development Partnership Plans include gender equality objectives and outcomes, including sexual and reproductive health and rights.*

2. Australia should adopt a gender-transformative, decolonising approach across all programming

- *Prioritise genuine partnerships with local civil society, feminist organisations and sexual and reproductive health providers to inform gender responsive programming.*
- *Strengthen the integration of sexual and reproductive health and rights within climate adaptation, disaster resilience building and emergency response programming.*

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 **IPPF** International
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- *Ensure programming to address sexual and gender- based violence takes a rights-based approach and includes access to sexual and reproductive health services.*

3. Australia should increase investment in targeted tools and interventions to advance sexual and reproductive rights health and rights and drive gender equality.

- *Support a shift in gender norms and improve the sexual and reproductive health outcomes for young people through the acceleration of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE).*
- *Increase investment in digital health interventions to support gender inclusive access to sexual and reproductive health information and services.*

Based on our experience and representing local civil society in Nepal, we would also like to highlight the following key points for consideration when developing the new International Gender Equality Strategy:

- **Cultural and Social Context:** Nepal has a divers cultural and social context, with various ethnic groups and regional variations. It is essential to consider the specific cultural norms, practices, and beliefs that may impact gender equality. Take into account the existing gender roles, power dynamics, and social expectations.
- **Economic Empowerment:** Address economic barriers that hinders gender equality in Nepal.
- **Political Participation and Leadership:** Promote women's participation and leadership in decision-making processes at all levels, including political, social, and community spheres.

Feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss further.

Kind regards,



Dr. Naresh Pratap KC
Executive Director