



COMMUNICATION ON ENGAGEMENT (COE) for Ipas, Inc.

Period covered by this Communication on Engagement

July 1, 2019 - July 1, 2021

Part I. Statement of Continued Support by the Chief Executive or Equivalent

July 15, 2021

To our stakeholders:

Ipas reaffirms its support to the United Nations Global Compact and its Ten Principles in the areas of Human Rights, Labor, Environment, and Anti-Corruption.

Ipas has been addressing women's human rights and gender equality by working to increase access to safe abortion and contraception for almost 50 years. Abortion, contraception, and sexual and reproductive health and rights in general, are inextricably linked to broader issues of human rights and democracy. Without the ability to control and manage their sexuality and reproductive choices, women have little power over other aspects of their lives. Like the UN Global Compact, Ipas is committed to the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 3, good health and well-being, and SDG 5, gender equality.

Please find below our Communication on Engagement.

Sincerely yours,

Anu Kumar, PHD, MPH
President and CEO

Part II. Description of Actions

Actions Ipas has taken in support of the UN Global Compact's principles during the timeframe indicated include:

CORPORATE SUSTAINABILITY

In our *letter of application to join the UN Global Compact* we pledged to "Propose and implement partnerships on corporate sustainability and engage with other stakeholders."

- An important action in FY20 was the development and publication of Ipas's framework for a sustainable abortion ecosystem, which identifies steps for program design, action, and evaluation. The framework recognizes critical relationships between programming and operational outcomes and is intended to support systemic change. Desired outcomes include: 1) improved policies, laws, and financing; 2) enhanced agency and social norms; and 3) improved access, availability, quality, and acceptability. Ipas teams in Mozambique, Nigeria, Nepal, and Malawi used the framework in FY20 to assess strengths and needs in their national abortion ecosystems and found the approach to be useful for bringing partners together and better coordinating and prioritizing efforts.

We have shared this Framework widely with partners, donors, and stakeholders. Ipas's 17 country offices have engaged with local partners using the Sustainable Abortion Ecosystem Framework and its tools as a guiding document.

HUMAN RIGHTS

- Ipas advised several UN bodies—including United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and United Nations (UN) Women—on opposition tactics as they planned for SRH-related events. Ipas leads a civil society coalition monitoring the opposition at the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) and the Commission on Population and Development (CPD).
- Ipas staff from Mexico, Mozambique, and the DRC engaged with treaty reporting mechanisms for the Human Rights Committee, the Committee Against Torture, and the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) committee to document and hold their governments accountable for access to abortion care.
- Ipas provided input to the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to the Highest Attainable Standard of Physical and Mental Health on the subject of medical education and health workforce strengthening. We also advised the UN Special Rapporteur on Violence Against Women regarding mistreatment and violence against women during reproductive health care with a focus on childbirth. Ipas worked with the Special Rapporteur on Cultural Rights and is building a relationship with the Special Rapporteur on Freedom of Expression or Belief (FoRB) who is investigating how FoRB is impacting and/or limiting access to human rights related to gender.
- Ipas's Central America and Mexico (CAM) program submitted shadow reports to the United Nations Human Rights Committee, Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (CESCR), the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), and CEDAW for Nicaragua. CAM also participated in the presentation of official reports before CESCR, UPR, and CEDAW, and increased their presence in advocacy spaces including the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights and in the OAS follow-up mechanism for preventing and eradicating violence against women.

- During FY20, one of Ipas’s Senior Policy Advisors joined the 21-member Civil Society Advisory Group for the coordination and organization of the Generation Equality Forum, serving as a conduit between civil society, UN Women, and the governments of France and Mexico to ensure that access and rights to abortion remain high on the Beijing+25 Agenda.
- The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating inequalities, and people who faced systemic and structural barriers to care before, suffer the most. Denial or lack of access to SRH, including safe abortion, is especially devastating for marginalized populations who already contend with legal, economic, social, cultural, and logistical barriers to care. Ipas responded to the pandemic by working to ensure that abortion and contraception remain essential health services—and that all people can access them. Ipas country offices have deep relationships with Ministries of Health (MOH), local governments, and local partners.

ENVIRONMENT

A growing body of evidence links climate change to negative SRHR outcomes for women and girls – which are often further exacerbated due to other intersections, such as age, wealth status, geography, and ethnicity. A study by the International Union for Conservation of Nature documents extensive direct links between environmental pressures and gender-based violence, including sex trafficking, sexual abuse, and sexual exploitation. As climate disasters force millions of people from their homes, access to health services, including contraception and safe abortion care, are disrupted.

Ipas developed a Climate Change Strategy during this reporting period to identify areas of work where we can contribute to bringing attention to the links between SRHR and climate change, and alleviating the harms caused by climate change. Ipas’s Sustainable Abortion Ecosystem Framework can be applied at the intersection of SRHR and climate change and considers the contextual factors needed to sustain a resilient abortion ecosystem.

Ipas recently released a [Women-led Climate Justice section on our web page](#) to highlight this important work. In addition, Ipas takes measures to reduce our impact on the environment including reducing travel, encouraging work from home, encouraging paperless communications.

ANTI-CORRUPTION

Ipas’s policies and procedures work against corruption in all its forms, including extortion and bribery.

- Ipas’s Code of Business Ethics and Conduct sets out Ipas’s expectations for compliance with legal, ethical, and other requirements that govern Ipas and its business.
- The Conflict of Interest and Disclosure policy requires an annual sign off by all staff to disclose activities such as a relative working at a vendor organization, or membership on the board of another organization. If a change takes place during the year, employees are asked to update this form more than annually.
- Ipas’s Safeguarding Policy was designed to protect people, particularly children, at-risk adults, and beneficiaries from harm that may be caused due to their contact with Ipas.
- Ipas has an Ethics Hotline and related policies that allow staff, vendors, and contractors to report fraud, bribery, extortion, or other ethics violations anonymously to a hotline that is available 24/7. A link for reporting is on our public-facing website. There is also contact information for country program staff to report locally.

- Confidentiality is rigorously maintained to prevent retaliation.
- Ipas has policies to guide investigations.

LABOR

Ipas strives to foster fair labor practices that support employees, eliminate discrimination, and prohibit child labor. Ipas's compensation program is a management tool that is designed to support, reinforce, and align core values, business strategy, operational needs, and budgets.

Ipas periodically conducts a compensation review, including an assessment of market conditions in the countries where we operate. As a result, we may adjust salary bands and grades accordingly and conduct an internal equity assessment to support recruiting and retention efforts aligned with Ipas's mission and organizational strategy. Ipas benchmarks salary grades against similar non-profit organizations, comparable annual budgets, and equivalent employee headcounts.

Protected classes including race, color, age, religion, national origin, sex (including gender, pregnancy, sexual orientation, gender identity), physical or mental disability, and veteran status, are covered under Ipas's policies and procedures. "Culture of respect" training increases staff understanding of, and prevention of, sexual harassment and bullying.

Distribution of work between Ipas country offices and local partners varies by project. Ipas as an organization, and our staff, embrace and implement partnerships that foster collaboration, transparency, equity, and accountability, and advance the field of sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). We build the skills and demonstrate the behaviors that show the organization is a trustworthy and respectful collaborator. As partners, we analyze our interests, relative power, strengths, and limitations in any relationship and transparently communicate those to current and potential partners. We ask the same of all partners to build the most productive partnership possible. We ask partners for their feedback about the process, outcomes, and relationship—and are willing to give them feedback about these issues—and we incorporate that feedback into our future partnerships.

Part III. Measurement of Outcomes

	Indicators	Results	
Impact Level			
Mission		FY19	FY20
Women and girls have improved sexual and reproductive health and rights through enhanced access and use of safe abortion and contraceptive care.	# of unsafe abortions averted ¹	389,029	396,646
	# of all abortions in country performed at Ipas-supported facilities ²	731,261	612,352
	# of unintended pregnancies averted ¹	592,419	809,045

Outcome 1		FY19	FY20
Enabling environment supports women and girls' access to high quality abortion and contraceptive care.	# of policy outcomes that promote access to abortion for women and girls ³	188	101
<i>Output 1.1</i>			
Global and regional policy environments support women and girls' universal access to safe high quality abortion and contraception.	# of positive declarations or statements from global and regional bodies and civic societies	22	12
<i>Output 1.2</i>			
National policy environment supports women and girls' universal access to safe, high-quality abortion and contraception.	# of positive public statements from key influencers and policy makers	92	35