Plan International
Interim report (period July 2020 – June 2021)

CEO OPENING STATEMENT

‘We are Open & Accountable’ is one of our organisational core values, and like the other core values it is integrated in all that we do. The Accountable Now reporting mechanism allows for our organisation to reflect on how it is meeting the commitments in all areas of our work in regard to Accountability. This interim report shares our progress against the feedback received from your last report. I take this opportunity to highlight key priorities of ours, whose implementation is well underway, and help put into context the many improvements detailed in the pages that follow.

For the reporting period, July 2020 through June 2021, we restructured our Global Hub Operations with the aim to develop a more service-oriented culture. The focus of our effort was on working better as a tightly coupled organisation to become impactful, innovative, and efficient. Our disciplined focus on impact is expected to drive the realization of high-quality programme designs and delivery by locating and leveraging innovation from Country Offices and National Organisations.

Additionally, we keep improving our performance management frameworks – both at an individual and entity levels. Our Monitoring Evaluation Research & Learning data management capability is being embedded in our daily functions to deepen evidence gathering and clearly demonstrate the impact we are generating (or not). We have also strengthened and improved the centrality of our knowledge management function and have taken concrete steps to improve how we learn as an organisation.

Furthermore, we are improving and supporting the realisation of an equitable, diverse, and inclusive workforce in Plan International while laying the necessary foundation for building a workplace culture of anti-racism and inclusion. To structurally support both our collective and individual efforts in this area, we have developed a multi-faceted roadmap to make all of our People & Culture processes, systems, and investments - from Talent Recruitment to Talent Rewards Management, more equitable, diverse, and inclusive.

Finally, I continue to be impressed by our individual and collective ambition to advance children’s rights and equality for girls. It fuels our drive, aligns our effort, and motivates our commitment. I also remain genuinely impressed with the resolve and commitment of our teams to carry out our important work in the face of significant workload, growing demands for our services and the significant impact Covid-19 has had on our staff, families, and communities.

Raj Nooyi
Interim Chief Executive Officer
This interim report includes supplementary information against those areas highlighted in the Accountable Now feedback report, where information or data was available. Some areas highlighted by the panel are not addressed due to timing of the report and update/progress is not available.

Cluster A: Impact Achieved

A2 Key strategic indicators for success
The FY21 results of organisation's achievements against its 5 years targets and strategic priorities is shared as an additional document. The results have been a key source to inform the last year of the Global Strategy priorities and focus, as well as contribute to the next global strategy to be approved in 2022. Results framework is reviewed by the Leadership team with the Strategic Dashboard shared with the International Board and Member’ Assembly. The results are publicly shared through the Annual Review on our website (FY21 Annual Review to be published January 2022). **Annex A 1 & A 2**

C. We lead by example

C2 Expertise is recognised and welcomed by peers and stakeholders
The Panel requested examples of feedback/engagement from peers and stakeholders, beyond partners and communities, indicating that the organisation’s expertise is recognised.

In relation to our Humanitarian work and strengthening our position as the go-to organisation for girls in crises, the following examples are provided:

- New global MoU signed with UNHCR (Dec 2020), with a focus on Child protection, Education in Emergencies and Livelihoods.
- Co-chairing the Gender Based Violence Call to Action¹ NGO working group.
- Co-lead of the Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action².
- Member of Steering Committee of Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack³.
- Member of Strategic Advisory Group of Global Education Cluster, Inter-Agency Network for Education in Emergencies (INEE) Gender Task Force⁴.
- Child Marriage in Humanitarian Settings field-based research with World Refugee Council in Philippines and Zimbabwe.

Examples in relation to our advocacy initiatives:

- Following the launch of our Girls Get Equal #FreeToBeOnline campaign to address online abuse, we achieved unprecedented press coverage globally. With public mobilisation, Instagram, Facebook, and WhatsApp agreed to a series of Listening Sessions with girl activists. Following these actions, the platforms committed to taking forward almost all of the girls' recommendations. We are now working on holding them to account.
- At the UN Commission on the Status of Women in March 2021, we achieved hard-won gains and new language on girls' political participation.

Published research:
- **The State of the World's Girls 2020**: Free to Be Online? Girls and Young Women’s Experiences of Online Harassment (*Downloads from our external website: 3,696*)

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¹ Call to Action on Protection from Gender Based Violence in Emergencies (calltoactiongbv.com)
² The Alliance for Child Protection in Humanitarian Action (alliancecpha.org)
³ Global Coalition to Protect Education from Attack (protectingeducation.org)
⁴ Gender Task Team | INEE
C5 Responsible stewardship for the environment

An update is provided answering the specific questions in the Accountable Now guidance.

Steps taken to minimise your negative environmental impacts work:

- Several Plan International offices prepare and implement office-level Environmental Action Plans with locally defined targets for reducing the environmental impact. Action plans define measures for conserving energy (cooling and heating), business travel, procurement and supply chain, waste management, divesting from fossil fuels, data management etc. These offices will highlight actions and define targets that are most relevant in the context of their work. We recognise this initiative is not yet consistent across all Plan International entities, hence one of the reasons why we have embarked on developing a Global Environment Policy that will set a direction for all of Plan International.

- In several offices, Plan International screens/assess the potential negative impact of its projects in the project’s design, inception, and implementation phase. In 2021 we tested the Plan International Environmental Assessment Tool in different thematic areas of our work and developed mitigation measures to address the potential negative environmental impact. We are currently packaging the tool for wider distribution and will promote its use across the organisation in 2022. The tool includes guidance for conducting gender and vulnerability assessment and climate risk assessment. In addition, we adhere to the donor guidelines and seek feedback from the people we serve.

Share lessons learned from assessing your environmental impacts:

We share the learning, challenges, and good practice in the networks we belong to. As signatories of The Climate and Environment Charter for Humanitarian Organisations, Principles for Locally Led Adaptation, UN Global Compact, we have an opportunity to meet peers and share policies, strategies and tools. In addition, our National Organisations share their results in national networks with other NGOs in the country.

We educate people about their impact on the environment, including staff and volunteers:

- Many Plan International offices have Green Teams, with representation from different teams (fundraising, administration, programme work, advocacy, etc.) who follow up and support the office-level Environmental Action Plans where these exist.

- Plan International Finland coordinates the Global Lead on Environment and Climate to mobilise support and work on specific tasks set for the year. Staff and volunteers can participate in various working groups under the Global Lead. Groups enable peer learning across the organisation.

We engage with other actors to drive change:

- Plan International has a clear policy focus on advancing gender equality and climate justice. The Global Hub leads international policy advocacy efforts, such as call for action in advancing gender transformative education for climate justice at COP26. At the same time, National Organisations and Country Offices follow up their national policy processes.

- We cooperate with youth-led climate change organisations and movements and enable meaningful engagement of girls, women, and marginalised groups in climate policy processes at local, national, and international levels. For example, at COP26, Plan International was involved in range of forums, discussion, and events such as the inter-generational dialogue ‘Advancing gender responsive child & youth participation in locally led adaptation’ with youth leaders from Red Cross Uganda, UNICEF Costa Rica and YOUNGO Bangladesh.

Ensuring our work continuously makes progress towards lasting positive environmental sustainability:
As noted above, Plan International is currently developing a Global Environmental Policy. The policy will set time-bound targets, including a joint GHG emission reduction target for all Plan offices. It is estimated that the Global Environmental Policy will be in place by June 2022. We will regularly renew the policy; its targets are reviewed every two years as our ambitions increase and our knowledge and capacity develop.

Cluster B: Stakeholder Involvement

F. Our advocacy work addresses the root cause of problems

F1 Evidence regarding the root causes of the problems you address
The Panel requested more tangible evidence that the advocacy work addresses root causes.

- Based on our FY21 annual reporting and global surveys, we capture data specifically on influencing activities and impact. The ‘Influentialness’ measure focuses on the progress we have made on girls’ rights issues (for example, policies, laws, budgets, systems and services).
- For FY21, 274 influencing progresses (i.e., influencing successes and outcomes) were reported by 71 Plan International offices. Of the progresses reported in FY21, 258 mapped to a specific Area of Global Distinctiveness (AOGD).
- In FY21, the highest numbers of influencing progresses are seen under the areas related to Protection from Violence (87 progresses) and Girls, Boys and Youth as Active Drivers of Change (71 progresses). Across the years, offices are consistently reporting lowest numbers of influencing progresses in the areas of Skills and Opportunities for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (SOYEE) and Early Childhood Development (ECD). In interpreting this data, it is important to note that in some instances Plan International’s advocacy is cross-thematic or non-sectoral in nature.
- The significance of each progress was assessed by offices in relation to the potential impact on girls’ rights. Across the sub-set of progresses linked to a specific AOGD, over 90% were judged by the reporting office as being of high (45%) or medium (48%) significance in the context. Definitions and how to count for reporting on influencing is in Annex A3.
- Example of Global Influencing: To promote the development of gender-responsive education systems and targeted actions ensuring girls’ continuity of learning and return to school when these reopen Plan International has actively contributed to the design and launch of ‘Building Back Equal: Girls back to school guide’, a publication developed by UNESCO’s Global Education Coalition’s Gender Flagship. This guide was developed to help Ministries of Education and others involved in planning and implementing education programmes to ensure continuity at all levels. The guide addresses four intersecting dimensions of school closures: learning; health, nutrition, and water, sanitation, and hygiene; protection; and teachers learning and wellbeing.
- Building Back Equal was launched with the African Union assistance and widely used to support COVID response planning in several countries around the world. It was complemented by a ‘Safe Back to School: A Practitioner’s Guide’, published by the Global Education Cluster and Child Protection Area of Responsibility, to which Plan International contributed.

F2 Stakeholders support your advocacy work and value changes achieved
In the last report, it was detailed that advocacy is based on the views of girls, young women, and their communities, and they are supported to participate in it. Strategic partnerships and coalitions, including those with girls and young people, have an increasing emphasis in Plan International’s work. Ongoing engagement to ensure improvements and responsiveness is also mentioned as key elements of the approach.

The panel requested examples of how coalitions joined Plan International’s work, to allow for better understanding on how the processes work in practice and that is it recognised and supported by peers.

Example: Global girls’ rights campaign - Girls Get Equal:
The Girls Get Equal campaign aims to inspire and mobilise people to engage with its gender equality and girls’ rights agenda. We are therefore counting the number of actions taken and reach achieved. We also aim to influencer power-holders to achieve impact on specific issues. One of the simplest things we can measure is the number of commitments made by powerholders and decision-makers in response to our campaigning. See Annex A4.

Some example of successes include:

- Over 22,600 new and existing supporters signed petitions or open letters standing in solidarity with young people campaigning for change. Key signatories include Myanmar’s Minister for Social Welfare and Diplomatic Representatives, and a Zimbabwean Minister of State.

- The Zimbabwe Junior Assembly filed a petition to the Home Office stating student’s demands for safe transportation to school. As a result, the Minister of State has ordered schools in the region to prioritise ferries as a safer transportation alternative.

- Youth from the ‘Changing Lives through Creating Opportunities’ project submitted a petition to six Municipal Governments in Honduras requesting permission to conduct citizen oversight processes. Among other things, this resulted in an allocated municipal budget specifically to commemorate International Day of the Girl annually.

- At the Asia Pacific Review for the Beijing+25 Declaration, 70 signatures were collected at the Ministerial Discussions to advocate for increased language on girls’ rights.

Example: Equal Measures 2030⁵:
Plan International host the secretariat for Equal Measures 2030. Equal Measures 2030 work together to support the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) implementation for girls and women over the fifteen-year lifespan of the goals, by ensuring not only that quality data is available, but also that policy-makers and advocates are able to utilise this evidence.

Plan International is joined in this partnership by Arrow, Data2x, Femnet, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, International Women’s Health Coalition, KPMG, ONE Campaign and Women Deliver. The partners will work closely with a variety of organisations to ensure we collaborate rather than overlap, act as both ally and antagonist, and use and access data from all sources.

Through joint leadership, advocacy, and communications we believe this initiative strengthens the ability of girls’ and women's movements, broader civil society, and the private sector to hold their governments to account, support policymakers to deliver evidence-based gender-responsive SDG implementation, contribute to and complement official tracking and push innovation in data collection, analysis, and visualisation.

Example Joining Forces⁶:
In 2017, the six largest child-focused agencies: ChildFund Alliance, Plan International, Save the Children International, SOS Children’s Villages International, Terre des Hommes International Federation, and World Vision International joined forces. We aim to use our collective power to accelerate change to secure children their rights and end violence against them. We pilot and scale innovative and effective approaches worldwide and be driven by the voices and needs of children.

The approach is to put children at the centre of what we do; we are committed to supporting children to raise their voices, to act as agents of change and to hold us to account, ensuring children’s experiences and views shape the solutions for the problems they face. We have adopted a rights-based approach by placing the principles of participation and inclusion, non-discrimination, and equality at the centre of our work to ensure that all children’s needs are addressed, and that no child is left behind. For example: Read Open letter from Children – ‘We need safe schools in Sahel Now!’ and example project ‘Helping parents support their children in Kakuma Refugee Camp’.

G3 Ensuring privacy rights and protecting personal data

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⁵ Equal Measures 2030 - Data and evidence with advocacy and action
⁶ About Joining Forces - Joining Forces (joining-forces.org)
Data privacy monthly newsletter provides practical advice for staff to implement data privacy policy and procedure. **Annex A5** is the November 2021 newsletter. All new staff must complete data privacy training within their first 6 months, and staff are expected to complete a refresher course every other year. In the reporting period 78% of staff completed the data privacy training (7,780 out of 10,017 staff globally).

**G4 Largest donors and their contributions**
The panel requested more information on how anonymous contributions are managed and prevented from unfairly influencing the work of PII.

As explained Plan International inc, funds are raised through fundraising bodies (National Organisations) that have their own policies governing anonymous contributions. These are pooled together and provided to country offices through Plan International inc. Plan International is fortunate to have a balanced and diverse funding portfolio, including funds from sponsorship. This eliminates any one donor influencing Plan International inc. organisational strategy and objectives.

For the reporting period the largest donors were:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Donor</th>
<th>Euro (€)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>World Food Programme (Gifts in Kind)</td>
<td>60.4 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Global Fund</td>
<td>28 million</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIDA (Swedish International Aid)</td>
<td>23 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNICEF</td>
<td>21.7 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>DFID Dep. for International Development</td>
<td>17.8 million</td>
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**Cluster C: Organisational Effectiveness**

**H1 Recruitment and employment is fair and transparent**
As requested by the panel, we share the specific guidance for hiring managers addresses awareness of bias and setting up diverse interview panels.

- At present Plan International’s Talent Acquisition Policy is applicable across Plan International Inc (PII). It specifies that we apply a fair and open merit based recruitment across the organisation, ensuring consistent and transparent processes and that all candidates are treated fairly and respectfully during our recruitment and selection processes. We ensure our processes reflect equal treatment of all candidates regardless of race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, political or religious belief, age, disability, marital status, or sexual orientation. Specific guidance for hiring managers and panellists with regards to ensuring an inclusive process and how bias can manifest during the selection process has been developed and is in use.

- In terms of the wider organisational culture, PII has developed Anti-Racism and Equity Vision and Principles and Feminist Leadership Principles, which are aligned to Plan International’s Values. PII’s Leadership Team provides their support to the Members’ Assembly commitment to Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism.

- Looking to the future Plan International Inc has developed an Equity, Diversity, Inclusion and Anti-Racism 12-24 month roadmap which includes aspects across: Our internal processes, Partnerships, Communications and Programming. With regards to the internal processes specifically, this includes actions around further training and guidance relating to fairness and transparency during recruitment including training for hiring managers, debiased hiring and global guiding principles and guidelines regarding inclusive recruitment and ensuring diversity throughout each stage of the recruitment process. *Talent acquisition policy is also provided (Annex A6)*

- Our HRIS systems are subject to data integrity initiatives, to ensure the information is accurate and UpToToDate, alongside other data integrity workstreams as we implement a new ERP. Staff data on contract type (full/part time), seniority, local hires, gender, ethnicity, age, and other relevant factors are being considered in on-going work and future reports will provide updates and progress. **Annex A7**.
H2 Staff development
As included in the last report - The People and Culture Strategy will include a learning and development 5-year plan, which will be aligned to the core organisational competencies, development, and growth requirements of all staff.

Staff training - For the reporting period over 52,000 online courses were completed by staff based in Country Offices, Regional Offices, Liaison offices and National Organisations. The courses ranged from ‘Basic Principles for Disability Inclusion’, to ‘Civil Society Strengthening’ and ‘M&E Technical Strengthening’. Courses are available in Arabic, French, Spanish and English.

The panel advised to include detail on the Performance Appraisal process – which is provided here. At Plan International, performance management is an ongoing process for managing performance, development, and career expectations in line with Plan International’s strategic ambition and results. Our commitment at Plan International is to ensure all employees receive the tools, skills, and authority they need to be successful in their jobs and achieve their potential.

The Principles are:
- The effective performance management of people is key to our success
- There is a clear line of sight between individual and organisational accountabilities
- Outstanding performance is recognised, rewarded, and differentiated. Under-achievement is addressed immediately
- Performance is determined by ‘what’ (objectives & outcomes) is delivered and ‘how’ (behaviours) results are achieved in line with Plan International’s values
- There is a fully collaborative environment where there is a two-way dialogue and agreement on the action needed to enhance performance
- Feedback is sought and given on a regular basis to help employees learn and develop in their role
- Performance management is supported by joined up online processes (HRIS System)
I. Resources are handled effectively for the public good

I1 Resources are acquired in line with your values, globally accepted standards and without compromising independence

The Panel requested more details on the Corporate Partnerships Ethical Engagement Policy and the types of industries PII is referring to. Annex A9 is the full document detailed the procedure.

I3 Minimising risk of corruption, bribery, and misuse of funds

In relation to minimising corruption, bribery, and misuse of funds, the panel requested further detail on staff sensitisation and training. The Counter Fraud Unit keeps a record of training sessions they have run, with Country Offices and National Organisations also running training sessions themselves. In addition to mandatory training, staff sensitisation includes the organisational core management standards in relation to anti-fraud and corruption:

| Clear commitment and measures are taken to prevent, detect and reduce loss to Plan International from fraud, dishonesty and corruption by staff, suppliers, partners, volunteers and third parties. | All staff are aware of the provisions of the Global Policy on Anti-Fraud Anti Bribery and Corruption and Whistleblowing Policies. |
| Reports of suspected/alleged cases of fraud are reported to the Counter Fraud Unit promptly. | The Safecall independent whistleblowing system is publicised to all staff and associates. |
| There is adequate segregation of duties in risk areas such as Finance, logistics and procurement and HR. |
With Country Offices conducting an annual self-assessment against the Management Standards, it is an opportunity to assess staff training levels, handling reports etc.

The questions and means of verification in the self-assessment, allow country offices to score themselves in meeting the standards. If they score less than 65%, they must have a management action plan. **Annex A10.**

Additionally, all guidance to the self-assessment includes the following reminders:
- If you have a concern regarding Fraud and/or safeguarding as the self-assessment is completed, contact plan@safecall.co.uk.
- An explanation mark 🗝️ indicates that confidential information is involved, and that extra care should be taken to ensure data protection is not breached.

**J. Governance processes maximise accountability**

**J5 Protecting confidentiality and anonymity of those involved in complaints.**
The panel requested clarity on mechanisms used to help ensure Whistleblower confidentiality and anonymity, and how staff are made aware and encouraged to report wrongdoing through anonymous channels.

**Mechanisms**

1. A Whistleblower can raise concerns internally or externally. A Whistleblower does not need to reveal their identity at all to raise a complaint via the external whistleblowing channel Safecall. Safecall – is the independent and confidential misconduct reporting facility.

2. Information on the identity of the Whistleblower, if known to PII is only shared confidentially on a need-to-know basis during the investigation process. If the identity of the Whistleblower is known but they choose to remain anonymous, this is respected, and the information is restricted on a need-to-know basis.

3. There are options for the Whistleblower to advise on the levels of anonymity.
   - Named: Agrees that their identity can be passed by Safecall to Plan International.
   - Semi Anonymous: Agrees to provide their identity to Safecall but does not want this passing to Plan International. Safecall may contact them using the details they have provided.
   - Anonymous: Does not want to provide their identity to Safecall or Plan International.

4. The Whistleblower’s identity if known is not revealed to the alleged preparator unless the person wishes for his/her identity to be shared. Appropriate protection is provided to all Whistleblowers.

**Staff awareness and encouragement to report**

1. The contact details for Safecall are accessible to all staff via the intranet. Country/regional offices have Safecall posters in their offices. Posters are available in English, Spanish and French.
2. There is regular socialisation of the policy to all staff.
3. The Whistleblower can submit their concern via Safecall in writing or by calling a free telephone line from any location/country.
4. Concerns submitted in writing can be done in any language of the Whistleblower’s choice.

**K. Leadership is dedicated to fulfilling the 12 Commitments**

**K1 The governing body and management are held accountable for fulfilling strategic promises**
The Panel suggested providing information on the results of the International Board self-assessment and examples of actions taken. However, the self-assessment results are confidential and cannot be shared. The International Board however discussed these in their closed session and also with the Nominating & Governance Committee of the Members Assembly.
K2 Inclusion of staff in discussing progress toward organisational accountability
The panel requested further detail on how staff are involved in decision-making:

- In July 2020 we started the first phase of our Global Strategy Update (GLOSUP). Our key objectives for this phase were to deepen a common understanding of our essence and purpose, identify our key strengths and weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

- From July till October 2020, we conducted various youth and all-staff engagement activities. We also conducted in-depth interviews with our global Plan International leadership and selected peers and partners, and our Regions hosted a Regional Congress each, bringing together colleagues, youth, and partners from across the region and interested governors and board members.

- Youth engagement activities received more than 2,300 responses, the all-staff engagement activities received over 8,700 responses from across the organisation and the Regional Congresses were attended by more than 250 participants.

- Results and recommendations were consolidated with a set of prioritised themes as well as GLOSUP design principles were presented to our governors, which were approved at the Members’ Assembly (MA) meeting November 2020.

- GLOSUP Phase 2 consisted of Work Groups investigating themes and delivering concrete strategic recommendations by May 2021. Work Groups were made up of experts from across our global Plan family. Each group had a mandate to engage with youth and partners during this phase. The results of the Work Group were shared through workplace, where staff could vote for their favoured thematic priorities. These were also taken to the Members’ Assembly in June 2021 for approval.

- GLOSUP Phase 3 engaged with similar work group to define ambition statements, results framework, and targets for the next global strategy. These were again shared with staff for input and taken to stakeholder group across Plan International. The final stage of approval of the Global Strategy will take place in 2022. Throughout this process staff engagement strategy and activities took place with fora for discussions using digital tools. This also enabled many youth groups and partners to input in the various phases of the strategy development.

K3 Scope of this accountability report and influence over national entities
As requested, we are providing information on measures in place in cases of non-compliance by national organisations. The procedure for National Organisation non-compliance to global policies, which would result from the audits is as follows:

1. Recommendations for improvement agreed with National Organisation management
2. Progress against agreed actions to be reviewed by the National Organisation Board (all audit reports are copied to the relevant National Organisation Board)
3. Progress against audit actions is recorded by National Organisations through Plan International risk management system.
4. Global Assurance follow up of high priority actions
5. Global Assurance report to the International Board if key actions not implemented. The IB can also bring up non-compliance with the Members Assembly if required.

- The Global Assurance (GA) team completed Global Policy Audits at 18 National Organisations (2019-2020). These audits, which are higher level and lighter touch than the Control Framework Audits that GA carries out in country offices, are intended to provide the International Board and the National Organisations with an independent and objective opinion on the extent to which each National Organisation is adhering to our Global Policies. In this first round of audits three approved Global Polices were reviewed: (a) Safeguarding Children and Young People, (b) Anti-Fraud, Anti-Bribery and Corruption and (c) Safety and Security.

- Each National Organisation received an audit report with conclusions outlined for each policy, and with findings and recommendations. Management Action is determined by the National
Organisations and their progress tracked accordingly. This first round of global policy audits proved a useful and instructive exercise. The collaboration and openness of National Organisations was appreciated, which created a forum for shared learning. The exercise raised some issues and opportunities for improvements and learning in every National Organisation. Common or thematic issues that require attention or clarification from the respective PII policy owners have also been noted.