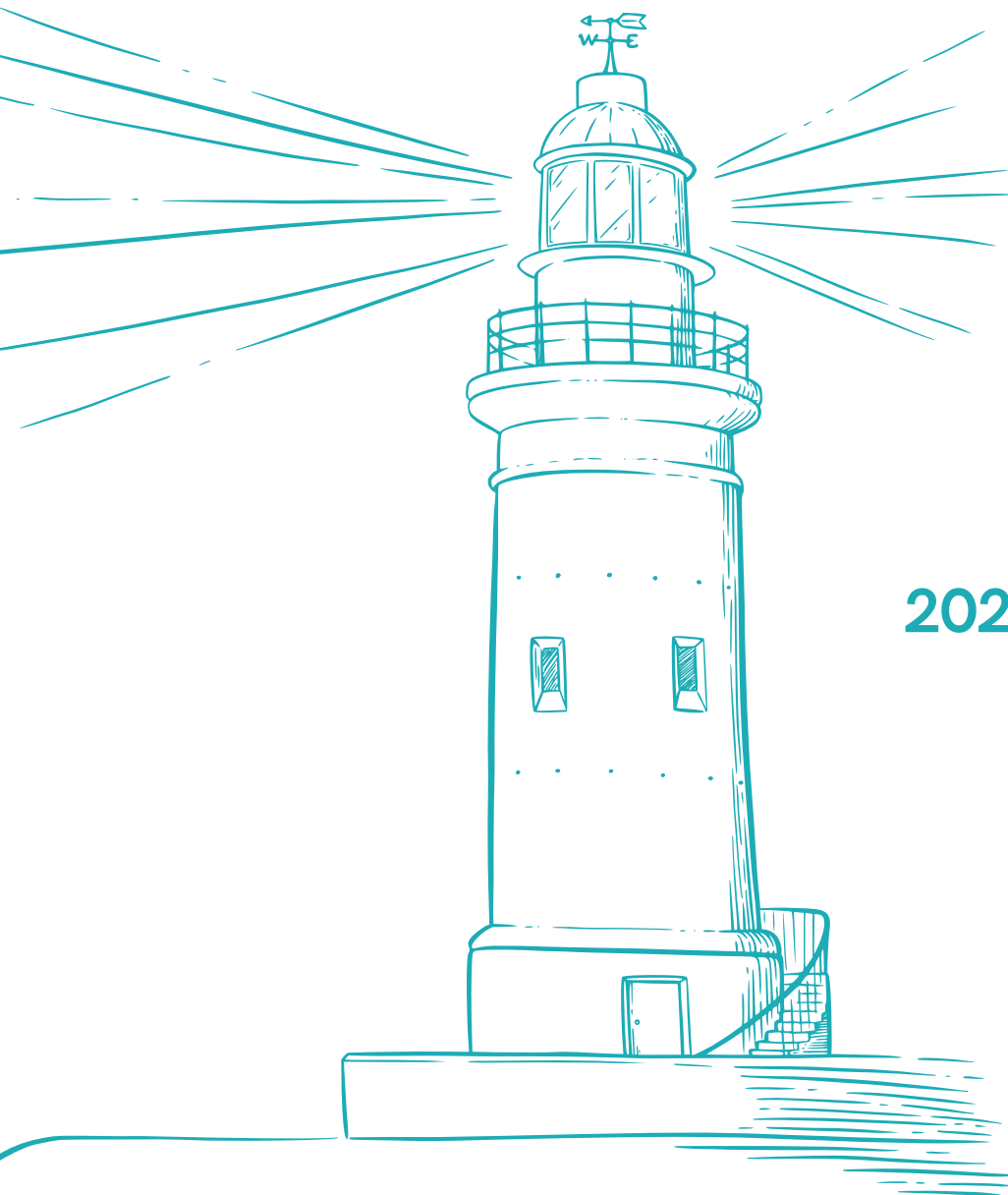


International Gender Champions

LIGHTHOUSE STRATEGY



2026 - 2030

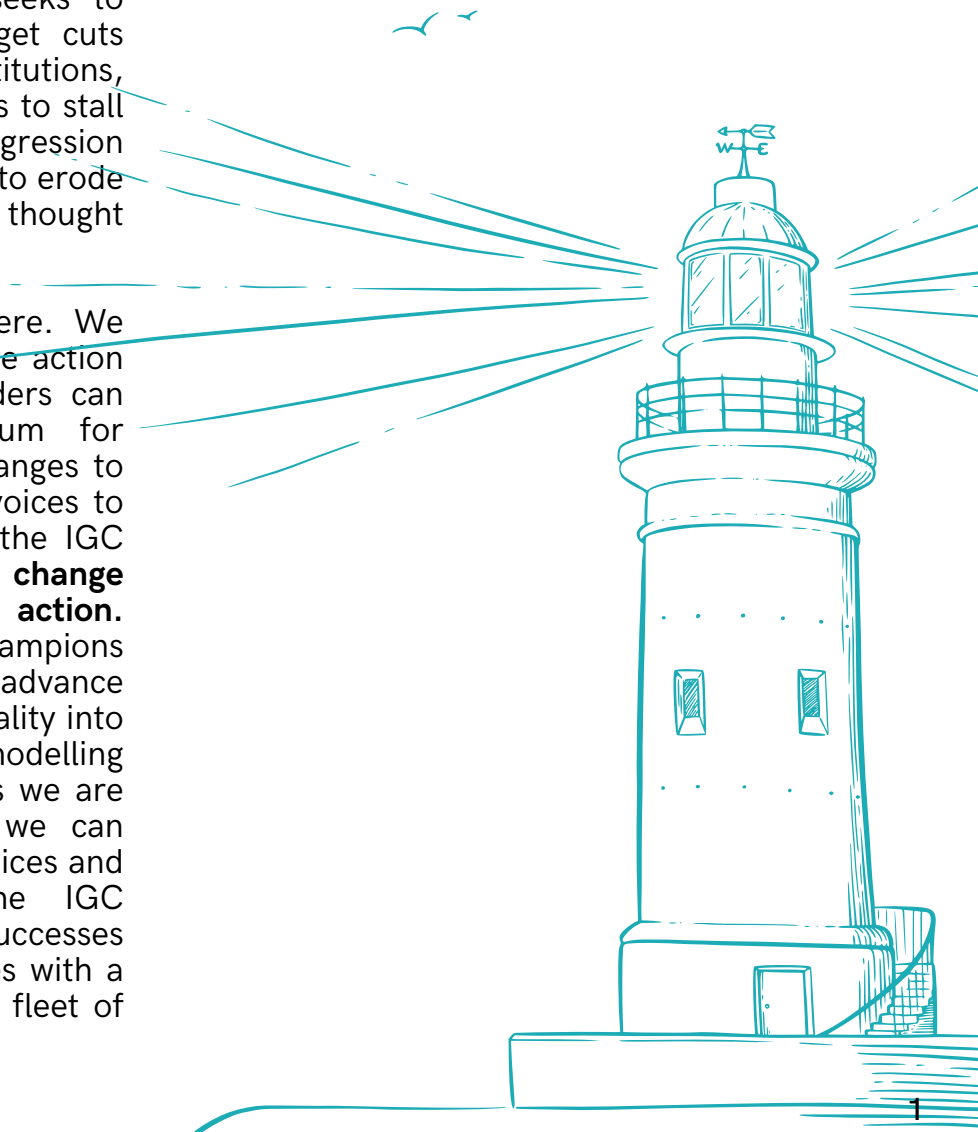
INTRODUCTION

In 2015, the International Gender Champions (IGC) was founded with a simple, but bold vision: **uniting international decision-makers determined to advance gender equality.** Since then, the IGC has grown from an idea into a powerful global network, spanning regions, sectors and institutions. Since its inception, over 800 leaders worldwide have agreed to the IGC core pledges and made concrete commitments to advance gender equality through their institutional or programmatic work.

As we celebrate **ten years of collective leadership** in a milestone year for gender equality, we take pride in the impact we have made together. But we also recognise that we are navigating turbulent waters. Around the world, gender equality is facing mounting resistance: political pushback seeks to roll back hard-won gains, budget cuts undermine programmes and institutions, and polarised discourse threatens to stall momentum. The currents of regression are strong, and they are working to erode principles and rights once thought secure.

But the story does not end there. We have seen the power of collective action and the unique role global leaders can play in accelerating momentum for gender equality. From policy changes to cultural shifts, from amplifying voices to implementing tangible reforms, the IGC network has proven that **real change happens when leaders take action.** Across our six hubs, Gender Champions are taking active steps to advance progress, embedding gender equality into their core practices and role-modelling the change they want to see. As we are navigating these stormy seas, we can build on the wealth of good practices and collective expertise within the IGC network, learn lessons from successes and mis-steps and ride the waves with a stronger, united, and more agile fleet of boats.

This is a **crossroads moment**: one where we must hold the line on what has been achieved while setting our sight firmly on the horizon. Born from a participatory process of reflection and visioning, the Lighthouse Strategy is our response to this moment. It is intended as a beacon to illuminate the way forward — guiding us through uncertainty, harnessing the collective strength of our Champions, and charting a course toward a more equal future.



AT A GLANCE: IGC'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030

This strategy communicates to our partners, funders, and the wider ecosystem how IGC mobilises leaders as a unique driver of systemic change for gender equality.

IGC's Lighthouse Strategy is a five-year plan rooted in resilience, but looking toward possibility: to unify IGC's diverse leadership community, to align our many strands of work into a coherent framework, and to sharpen our priorities for coordinated, high-impact action. We will leverage our unique network of leaders to drive lasting social change by reclaiming momentum and creating a positive vision for gender equality across multilateral arenas.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To safeguard IGC's core mission while retaining flexibility, the Secretariat will dedicate 80% of resources to strengthening core priorities for depth, consistency, and measurable impact, and 20% to responding to emerging challenges and supporting Champion-led initiatives.

CORE PRIORITIES (80%)

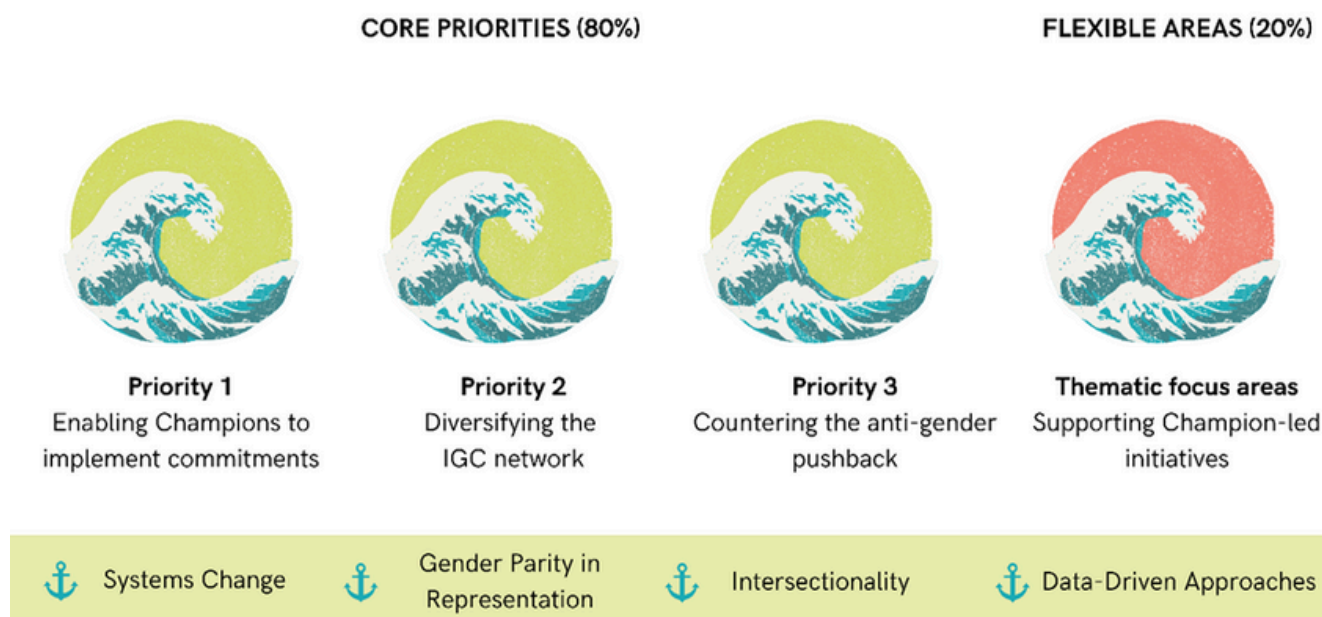
- Enabling Champions to implement their core commitments
- Diversifying the IGC network
- Countering the anti-gender pushback

FLEXIBLE AREAS OF WORK (20%)

- Supporting Champion-led initiatives on thematic priority areas

CONCEPTUAL ANCHORS

Activities will consistently be designed, implemented and evaluated through four conceptual anchors: systems change, parity of representation, intersectionality and data-driven approaches.



AT A GLANCE: IGC'S STRATEGIC PLAN 2026-2030

IGC VALUES

The Lighthouse Strategy sets a clear and purposeful direction, grounded in IGC's values and Champions' voice, initiative and ownership.

In addition to the IGC Panel Parity Pledge, the Gender-Based Violence Pledge and their two S.M.A.R.T. commitments, Champions are expected to actively promote gender equality within their sphere of influence, act in accordance with the highest ethical standards and embody IGC's values, including:

- Treating every person with respect and fairness;
- Valuing diversity;
- Creating and maintaining safe workplaces;
- Working together with other Champions in a spirit of openness, honesty and transparency.

STRUCTURAL ENABLERS FOR DELIVERY

With guidance from the Global Board and hub-specific Steering Groups, the IGC Secretariat facilitates Champions' engagement by providing quality assurance, coordination, and support, and by connecting Champions across hubs and sectors to enhance the network's overall impact. Its capacity to achieve this target and effectively deliver on the Lighthouse Strategy depends on the following structural enablers, which we are committed to strengthening:

- **Diversified Funding:** In partnership with Champions and network members, mobilising additional resources, securing long-term, core funding and exploring income-generation opportunities to sustain strategic priorities, respond to emerging needs, and reduce vulnerability to budget cuts. Funding decisions will be guided by due diligence principles, including values alignment, independence in decision-making, sustainability, and the ability to absorb related administration costs.
- **Secretariat and Hub Coordination Capacity:** Expanding and strengthening the operational capacity of the Secretariat to structurally support IGC hubs, ensuring sustainable resourcing of hub coordination, and fostering effective knowledge flow between hubs.
- **Governance Mechanisms and Procedures:** Reinforcing governance mechanisms to enhance accountability, transparency, and coherence across hubs, supporting the Secretariat's role in ensuring quality assurance and coordinated delivery.
- **Champion ownership:** Leveraging Champions' active engagement and leadership in initiating, co-designing, and driving network priorities and collaborative projects.
- **Partnerships and Strategic Collaboration:** Leveraging partnerships, consortia, and pro bono expertise to enhance efficiency, reduce duplication, and maximise the impact of coordinated action.

VISION AND MISSION

The IGC's unique value lies in its network of leaders whose individual credibility and institutional influence, when mobilised collectively, can catalyse change in multilateral spaces across our hubs. Its strength comes from **connecting influence to action**, enabling Champions to take ownership and drive positive change where decisions are made.

IGC's vision is a global community of leaders who safeguard and advance gender equality. We envision a future where international decision-makers across regions, sectors, and institutions lead by example, drive collective action to dismantle gender barriers, shape a compelling narrative for equality, and integrate gender considerations into all areas of institutional practice. By doing so, they set new standards of leadership that are brave, principled and inclusive.

IGC's mission is to mobilise leaders as active agents of change for gender equality and translate their leadership into lasting impact through concrete commitments, collective accountability, mutual learning and strategic advocacy.

IGC'S THEORY OF CHANGE

If influential leaders embed gender equality into the policies they shape and into the priorities, operations, and culture of the institutions they guide, then global systems evolve toward fairness and inclusion. The International Gender Champions (IGC) network accelerates this shift by **transforming personal commitment into institutional practice**.

Champions adopt **specific, measurable commitments** that reshape policies, decision-making norms, and representation. Their actions become visible examples that inspire peers, reinforce public accountability, and normalise gender-responsive leadership across international cooperation.

Persistent engagement at the highest levels creates **cumulative change that cascades through organisations**, across sectors, and into multilateral agendas. Structural transformation becomes attainable when gender equality is no longer an optional advocacy topic, but a routine expectation of multilateral leadership.

This collective momentum strengthens a community of practice where leaders exchange strategies, celebrate progress, and confront persistent barriers. With its unique tripartite membership across governments, international organisations and civil society and a new outreach to the private sector, the **IGC breaks down silos**. Through bridging diverse perspectives, Champions uncover gender-blind spots, identify how systems can function more effectively, and seize openings to drive systemic change. Coming together as a network enables members to leverage **shared political will, momentum, and collective intelligence** to advance gender equality more powerfully than any single institution could achieve alone.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE IGC SECRETARIAT

IGC's constituency is unique in its diversity, bringing together high-level leaders from across regions, sectors, and institutions. This diversity is one of its greatest strengths, but it also carries the risk of mission fragmentation if energy is spread too thinly across competing initiatives. To safeguard focus on the IGC's core mission, while retaining the flexibility to respond to new developments and support Champion-led initiatives, we will introduce a deliberate balance to the Strategic Priorities guiding the work of the IGC Secretariat: 80% of resources and attention will be dedicated to strengthening IGC's core priorities, ensuring depth, consistency, and measurable impact. The remaining 20% will remain flexible, allowing the Secretariat to respond to existing and emerging thematic challenges for gender equality, for instance via targeted support to the IGC Impact Groups.

CORE PRIORITIES

To uphold the quality and credibility of the IGC network, amplify Champions' leadership, and protect gender equality gains in the face of global pushback, the IGC Secretariat will invest a significant portion of time and capacity in the following priority areas.

Goal 1: Leaders champion gender equality through concrete action and collective influence.

The IGC Panel Parity Pledge, the Gender-Based Violence Pledge and the two annual personal commitments are at the heart of the IGC model. To remain a powerful driver of change, the IGC Secretariat will work to further support Champion ownership of their commitments and the IGC mission, through data driven expert insights, peer-to-peer learning and accountability. By strengthening governance and using communications as a strategic tool, IGC will ensure that this leadership is both visible and impactful.

- **Outcome 1.1 Champions deliver impactful and measurable action on gender equality in their institutions and sectors.**

The Secretariat establishes closer relationships with Champions' teams to ensure that commitments are not only made, but consistently acted upon, strengthening both the credibility of the network and its collective impact. Champions take meaningful action and are supported in implementing their commitments through tailored support, practical tools, and clear accountability and reporting mechanisms.

- **Outcome 1.2 Stronger governance improves accountability and drives collective progress.**

Transparent governance structures guide Champions' engagement, create coherence across the network, and improve coordination between the Secretariat, Board, Steering Groups and Hub Coordinators.

- **Outcome 1.3 Communications drive influence by elevating Champions' results and mobilising stakeholders behind a strong gender equality narrative.**

Communications serve as a strategic tool to showcase Champions' leadership, highlight tangible results and create a compelling narrative for gender equality. Strategic storytelling and visibility help to mobilise new and existing stakeholders, strengthen legitimacy with partners, and build IGC's influence across regions and sectors. Visibility is not an add-on but a driver of influence.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR THE IGC SECRETARIAT

Goal 2: The IGC network is representative and influential across regions and sectors.

A broad and representative network is central to IGC's legitimacy and impact. The Secretariat and Champions themselves will prioritise diversifying IGC's membership by socialising IGC amongst peers across regions, sectors, and underrepresented groups, and ensure initiatives are locally anchored in each hub.

- **Outcome 2.1 IGC membership expands to better reflect global diversity.**

The network includes more Champions from underrepresented regions and member states, particularly from African and Asian member states. Governance, engagement mechanisms, and onboarding processes ensure that all Champions have meaningful opportunities to contribute, lead initiatives, and collaborate across hubs.

- **Outcome 2.2 Private sector leaders join and collaborate with the network.**

The network includes a first cohort of Champions from the private sector. Their engagement strengthens cross-sector collaboration, expands the network's reach, and creates opportunities for innovative approaches to addressing systemic barriers. Due diligence processes are in place to ensure alignment with IGC values.

Goal 3: Champions collectively safeguard gender equality and respond strategically to political pushback.

In light of the rising political pushback against gender equality, the Secretariat will support Champions in proactively responding to resistance, ensuring that hard-won achievements for gender equality and women's rights are defended and strategic opportunities for impact are identified and leveraged.

- **Outcome 3.1 Champions are equipped to deliver strategic and coordinated action on the gender pushback.**

Champions are supported to identify risks, mobilise responses, and safeguard progress in critical domains, including: gender mainstreaming across multilateral institutions and areas of work; women's and girls' rights; and sexual and reproductive health. The Secretariat facilitates coordination and collaboration across IGC's membership, ensuring efforts are aligned. It provides evidence-based analysis and facilitates peer-to-peer learning, enabling Champions to communicate with one voice and engage effectively with undecided or resistant stakeholders. Interventions are targeted, politically informed, and aligned with IGC's values.

FLEXIBLE AREAS OF WORK

In addition to advancing IGC's core priorities, the Secretariat maintains the capacity to amplify thematic focus areas and respond to emerging developments, primarily through support to existing Champion-led Impact Groups and initiatives, events and joint advocacy. The following fields will be prioritised:

- Climate-Gender-Nexus
- Digital and new emerging technologies
- Women, Peace and Security
- Engaging men for gender equality

CONCEPTUAL ANCHORS

From core areas of work to flexible initiatives, network members will consistently be encouraged to design, implement and evaluate IGC activities through the following conceptual anchors.

SYSTEMS CHANGE

Challenging power structures and systemic barriers that sustain inequality by influencing policies, institutional practices, and cultural norms.

GENDER PARITY IN REPRESENTATION

Ensuring gender-balanced representation with the ultimate goal of achieving gender parity remains a cross-cutting objective across IGC's areas of work and that diverse voices are present and influential in decision-making, leadership, and programme development.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Advancing gender equality through an inclusive lens that recognises and reflects the complex ways in which social identities interact to shape experiences of privilege or marginalisation.

DATA-DRIVEN APPROACHES

Using evidence and measurable outcomes to guide decisions, track progress, and strengthen accountability.

MECHANISMS OF DELIVERY

Within the period of the Lighthouse Strategy (2025–2030), the IGC Secretariat will strengthen the network's capability to deliver on the strategic objectives set out above through the following mechanisms.

I. STRATEGIC CONVENINGS

As a tripartite network, IGC provides a unique platform where high-level leaders can come together for peer-to-peer exchange and coordinated action on gender equality. We will, in close partnership with network members, provide more opportunity for Champion-led, closed-door convenings with experts to build action coalitions, foster joint problem-solving and equip Champions with actionable strategies for safeguarding and advancing gender equality in the multilateral sphere.

II. QUALITY ASSURANCE

Champions' ownership of their pledges and commitments is central to IGC's impact. To support effective implementation and active engagement within the network, the IGC Secretariat will strengthen its onboarding process for new Champions and their teams and monitor implementation of commitments more closely. Where commitments are not being met, we will engage constructively to reinforce accountability and identify obstacles. In partnership with the Global Board, offboarding procedures will be strengthened and transparently communicated to members of the network.

III. AMPLIFICATION AND ADVOCACY

Communications drives influence in IGC's model by engaging Champions as role-models for change. IGC communications will place stronger emphasis on spotlighting Champions' commitments and impact to build positive messaging and inspire action for gender equality. The Secretariat will strengthen its communications and advocacy support to Champions and their teams by providing them with relevant evidence, messages and talking points.

IV. KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

Knowledge sharing is a key pillar of the IGC network. The IGC Secretariat will continue to provide dedicated spaces and platforms for Champions and their teams to share lessons learned, exchange best practices and co-create. We will strengthen feedback loops between the different IGC hubs to ensure cross-regional learning and replication of successful approaches.

V. PARTNERSHIPS

The IGC will build on its collaborative approach to strengthen existing partnerships as well as foster strategic alliances with new partners, including local and national institutions, private sector actors, philanthropic partners and feminist civil society organisations. We will prioritise partnerships that are values-driven, mutually reinforcing, and rooted in feminist principles.

MECHANISMS OF DELIVERY

VI. LIGHTHOUSE KEEPERS

The Secretariat will work closely with members of the Global Board, the Steering Groups across hubs and the IGC Patrons to serve as visible ambassadors of IGC's mission, share guidance, and support outreach to new Champions and partners.

VII. IMPACT GROUPS

Impact Groups haven proven an effective vehicle for Champion-led action and focused advocacy on priority themes. While strengthening Champions' ownership of Impact Groups, the Secretariat will continue to offer support to increase their visibility within and beyond the network and amplify their work in multilateral arenas.

In advancing the above, the following considerations will guide the Secretariat:

- **Impact over breadth:** Prioritise fewer, deeper interventions that deliver measurable change over dispersing energy and resources too thinly.
- **Collaboration over competition:** Harness collective leadership, partnerships and shared accountability rather than protecting individual agendas. Act with unity of vision and intent, aligning efforts under a common agenda.
- **Adaptability:** Remain flexible in our actions while staying true to our core mission in responding to global shifts, emerging challenges, and new opportunities.
- **Integrity:** Lead with principle and consistency, affirming that gender equality is not a passing trend but a fundamental right and enduring commitment.
- **Courage:** Move beyond established patterns, lean into resistance and experiment with creative solutions to advance change.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Lighthouse Strategy (2026–2030) will be operationalised through **annual plans** that translate the strategic framework into specific targets, activities, and measurable indicators. These plans will be developed by the Secretariat on an annual basis and reviewed and approved by the Global Board. They will serve as the basis for monitoring progress and inform the end-of-year annual reporting.

In 2028, a **mid-term assessment** will be conducted to take stock of achievements, challenges, and lessons learned, and to make any necessary adjustments to ensure the strategy remains effective.