

Note for the Record

PMNCH Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

05 August, 2013 – Telephone Call

Present: Flavia Bustreo and Elizabeth Mason (WHO); Tinu Taylor (Government of Nigeria); Rafael Cortez (World Bank); Ruth Lawson (DFID); José Miguel Belizán (Institute of Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy); Craig Friedrichs (GSM Association); Sabaratnam Arulkumaran (FIGO).

PMNCH Secretariat: Carole Presern, Nebojsa Novcic

AGENDA

Chair: Flavia Bustreo

- Welcome and introductions
- ITEM 1 – Review of NfR of previous meeting
- ITEM 2 – Update on AU RMNCH meeting in Johannesburg
- ITEM 3 – External Evaluation of PMNCH (2009-2013)
- ITEM 4 – 2014 Partners' Forum, Board and Countdown to 2015
- ITEM 5 – PMNCH Financing Harmonisation Group
- ITEM 6 – AOB

1. Review and approval of NfR from the EC call on June 25, 2013

The note for the record from June 25, 2013, meeting was approved. The Chair led the EC in commending the Secretariat on the quality of the note that was presented.

2. Update on AU RMNCH meeting in Johannesburg

Carole updated the EC on the discussions and outcomes of the First African Union International Conference on Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (MNCH), held in Johannesburg from 01 to 03 August 2013. In the update, the EC was informed about the event and its outcomes, as well as the broader discussions that Flavia and Carole had with the PMNCH incoming Chair Mrs Graça Machel (including on the potential Partners Forum in 2014 and a Board retreat to be held towards the end of 2013). These are noted in turn below.

AU International Conference on MNCH (1 to 3 August, 2013)

Together with the Government of South Africa, the African Union Commission (AUC) convened a three-day conference under the theme, "A Call to Action," bringing together more than 500 delegates, including 27 African ministers of health, parliamentarians, United Nations agencies, and members of civil society. The program schedule also included a two-day pre-conference meeting entitled 'Maternal Death Surveillance and Response' (30 and 31 July, 2013).

In terms of the background to this conference, the AU has been a key proponent for accelerating and promoting efforts to improve women's and children's health in Africa. This conference came on the heels of the organization's "Abuja +12" summit from 12-16 July, where African leaders agreed to step up efforts to strengthen health systems, as well as a recent recommitment to women's and

children's health during an event on the AU's Campaign on Accelerated Reduction of Maternal Mortality in Africa (CARMMA) during the AU heads of state and government summit in January.

PMNCH contributed to the event in terms of organisation (supporting AUC colleagues on many of the challenges derived from the short timeframe allocated to its organisation), providing critical evidence base and leading discussions for this landmark event by hosting various sessions and working with a number of partners to contribute to a series of AUC policy briefs.¹ The policy briefs were well received by participants, with the Chairperson of the African Union Commission, Dr Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma personally noting that she found the documents remarkably informative and concise.

This important event will require considerable follow up, and the Partnership will be reaching out to its constituencies to discuss ways in which this work can be taken forward. Much of it will centre on the development of a 'Plan of Action Towards Ending Preventable Maternal, Newborn and Child Mortality', a draft of which will be adopted as key outcome of the conference. The Plan's Drafting Committee was convened during the conference, with PMNCH represented by Kadidiatou Touré and Michael Wong. Its implementation will need support from PMNCH and all of its Partners. This Plan of Action will be shared with the EC and will be finalized by the AUC on 19 August, 2013.

In terms of accountability activity that will be required to ensure the implementation of this Plan of Action, there was a consensus to work towards a pan-African Score Card.

Relevant web links for further information are:

<http://sa.au.int/en/content/international-conference-maternal-newborn-and-child-health-africa>
and
http://www.who.int/pmnch/media/events/2013/african_mnch_conference/en/index.html

Finally, the AU commended the work of the Partnership on promoting health (and health of women and children more specifically) in the post-2015 development agenda discussions. It was noted that PMNCH should continue to work in this area going forward.

Discussions with Mrs Graça Machel, including Partners Forum and Dec 2013 Board Retreat

Flavia and Carole had a very productive meeting in Pretoria with Mrs Graça Machel whilst they were in South Africa. The key points that emerged from these discussions include:

- Mrs Machel wrote a letter of thanks to the Board after the June 2013 Johannesburg Board meeting.
- Keen to build on the success of PMNCH's engagement to date on the post-2015 development agenda discussions.
- Expressed support for strengthening the approach of linking up with and implementing programmes in countries to 2015. This could be one of the themes of the forthcoming Partners Forum, as planned for summer/ autumn 2014.
- Noted that more work needs to be undertaken in supporting countries, who often have substantial domestic financing capability, to direct those resources in the most effective and efficient manner towards improving RMNCH.

¹ Afri-Dev; Countdown to 2015; the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Evidence 4 Action; Family Care International; Global Health Insights; the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights; the University College London Institute for Global Health; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the US Agency for International Development (USAID); White Ribbon Alliance; and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- Suggested a one day Board retreat (combined with virtual participation by those unable to be there in person) in December 2013. Agenda for this meeting is still to be developed, but might include: initial discussions on Partnership's post 2015 future; how to leverage Partnership's constituencies further; update on the ongoing evaluation of the Partnership; etc.

The EC expressed their support and were very encouraged by the discussions that have taken place in South Africa. It also noted Carole's message from the Countdown to 2015 colleagues, that one option is to combine the Partners' Forum with the launch of Countdown's next report, which is planned for June of 2014.

In addition, there was a suggestion that time should be set aside in the autumn EC meetings to discuss the agenda for the Board retreat.

3. External Evaluation of PMNCH (2009-2013)

The EC reaffirmed its support for the need to have an external evaluation of the Partnership, which will be overseen by the PMNCH Independent Evaluation Sub-Committee (Committee), and agreed that the process for going forward was as follows:

- Agreeing the Terms of Reference and membership for the PMNCH Independent Evaluation Committee.
- Once established, the Committee will approve the draft Terms of Reference for the evaluation work, which will then be published by the Secretariat with a view to solicit proposals from qualified consultants.
- The Committee will then lead the work (supported by the Secretariat, as appropriate) on evaluating the proposals received and recommending to the Executive Committee their preferred bidder. Such a recommendation would be provided to the EC with information about the evaluation process, firms that have bid, and the reasons for selection of the preferred bidder.
- The EC will confirm (or otherwise) the recommendation, after which the work of the consultants will commence.

In their discussions, the EC approved the presented draft Terms of Reference for the PMNCH Independent Evaluation Committee, subject to the following changes:

- Size of the Committee to be reduced to around five members, depending on interest from possible participants, and EC should not be represented on this Committee.
- Committee to provide the EC with information about the evaluation process for selecting consultants, in support of the recommendation for a preferred bidder (e.g. list of firms that have bid, reasons for selection of the preferred bidder, etc.).
- All meetings of the Committee will have notes for the record drawn up.
- Committee will have independent administrative support provided by consultants, as the Secretariat is understandably conflicted.
- Specify the time commitment required from the Committee members, probably up to 2 days a month at the start and when reviewing deliverables, but likely to be lower during the rest of the period.

In terms of membership, the EC discussed the list of colleagues that have been presented to date. Whilst noting that there was more scope to adjust the list, the EC agreed as follows:

- Current or former WHO colleagues (employed by WHO in the last five years) should not be on the Committee, as WHO hosts PMNCH.
- In terms of new additions, the Secretariat should include on the list UNICEF's Mickey Chopra as well as Frances Day-Stirk, President, International Confederation of Midwives.
- Among other stakeholders, it is important to include partner country representatives as well as major funders of PMNCH operations.
- Secretariat to provide a short list of five individuals for the EC to consider and approve on a no-objection basis, so that the Secretariat can approach them to check willingness and availability. In addition a reserve list should also be drawn up with other suggested names, should those from the initial list not be available.
- The shortlist and reserve list should be drawn from names proposed by constituencies, and on the basis of criteria set out in the Annex to the Terms of Reference for the Committee.
- In doing so, the EC discussed that whilst on the one hand it is important to avoid real or perceived conflicts of interest (in considering, for example, to include individuals who have been closely engaged with the Partnership as contractors and/ or partners), there was also a requirement for considering individuals that know PMNCH well. As such, a balance should be sought through the reserve list, which should include individuals that perhaps fall into this category.

4. 2014 Partners' Forum, Board and Countdown to 2015

This was discussed under Item 2 above.

5. PMNCH Financing Harmonisation Group

EC colleagues agreed to share directly with the Secretariat any comments that they had on the documentation related to this item.

6. AOB

No AOB was recorded.