# Note for the Record
# PMNCH Executive Committee (EC) Meeting

UNFPA, New York, 22 September, 2014

**PRESENT**

EC Members: Flavia Bustreo, WHO (FB); Francesco Aureli, Save the Children (FA); José Belizán, Institute of Clinical Effectiveness and Health Policy (JB); Sharon d'Agostino, J&J (SA); Frances Day-Stirk, International Confederation of Midwives (FD); Craig Friderichs, GSM Association (CF); Diane Jacovella, Canada (DJ); Nicole Klingen, World Bank (NK); Anshu Mohan, India (AM); Magda Robert (MR); and Julian Schweitzer, Results for Development (JS).

PMNCH Secretariat: Carole Presern (CP); Andrés de Francisco (AdF); Nebojsa Novcic (NN); Abir Shady (AS); and Geir Lie (GL).

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**AGENDA**

Chair: FB

- ITEM 1 – Review of action points and NfR of previous meeting
- ITEM 2 – Financing and governance
  - Update on the recruitment of PMNCH new Executive director
  - Board retreat
  - Update on constituencies definitions and members rotation
- ITEM 3 – Post-2015 PMNCH Strategy Development Process
- ITEM 4 – Board response to the PMNCH External Evaluation
- ITEM 5 – Reflections on accountability: PMNCH 2014 Accountability Report
- ITEM 6 – AOB

## Opening remarks

FB opened by welcoming all EC members to the in-person meeting in New York, and those who were on the phone. FB went on to note and welcome the significant level of current focus and commitment to women's and children's health, witnessed globally and at the 69th United Nations General Assembly held in New York. FB also noted the importance of PMNCH's engagement to date as well as going forward in the discussions on the proposed Global Financing Facility (GFF), which could have significant implications for the role that the Partnership will play in the months and years ahead.

## 1. Review and approval of action points and NfR of previous EC call on 31 July, 2014

CP presented the follow-up on decisions of the PMNCH Executive Committee meeting on 31 July, 2014, which included an update on the:

1. interactions with constituencies on the rotations of Board members;
2. process for consulting on the PMNCH's Post-2015 Strategy Note – Issues for Discussion; and
3. process for finalising the Board's response to the external evaluation, as well as the timetable for taking forward the recommendations that have emerged from the evaluation.

Comments from the group on these issues are reflected below.

The EC agreed that the process of following up on previous meeting's decisions is very helpful. In addition, and in the interest of transparency, the EC agreed that all EC meeting related documents, Notes for the Record, and follow-up decisions, should be made available on the PMNCH website, in the same manner as Board meeting documents. These Notes for the Record would therefore not identify individuals in terms of the discussion points, but would reflect the broad agreement at the EC as a whole.

The note for the record from the EC meeting on 31 July, 2014, was approved by all members.

**Actions:**

- Create a space on PMNCH website for publication of documents and decisions from EC meetings.

## 2. Financing and governance

**Governance**

- Update on the recruitment of PMNCH new Executive Director

FB informed the group that Mrs Machel (PMNCH Chair), Mr Mishra (PMNCH Co-Chair) and herself (as the other co-Chair) have been closely involved in the recruitment process to date. The job description was agreed and the advert published on the WHO website and The Economist.

The advertisement will be shared with the EC for onward distribution to the PMNCH membership and Egon Zehnder, an executive recruitment agency that has worked closely with many other UN agencies and has extensive experience in this area of work, has been hired to support the identification of potential candidates.

A selection panel has been formed, which will consist of the Chair and Co-Chairs of the PMNCH Board (Mrs Machel, Mr Mishra, and FB), together with representatives from the WHO Staff Association and WHO Human Resources representative. The structure of the selection panel is defined in the hosting Memorandum of Understanding between PMNCH and WHO. It is hoped that final shortlist of candidates will be ready to be presented by Mrs Machel for discussion by the Board in its closed session at the forthcoming retreat in December, 2014. The Board will then have an opportunity to ask questions and to make the final recommendation on the preferred candidate.

The EC agreed that it will be important for the selection panel to have clarity about the type of leader that the Partnership is looking for in the context of the changing post-2015 landscape. It was noted that the Partnership would benefit from a strong and visionary leader with energy and passion for the topic, someone who is not risk-averse. This role is not one for a 'bureaucrat'.

- Acting Executive Director

Dr Andres de Francisco, currently Deputy Executive Director, will assume the role of the Acting Executive Director in the interim period. This temporary appointment will not prejudice any eventual decisions by the selection committee and the Board.

- Board retreat
- EC agreed to hold the Board Retreat and the next Board Meeting together, over 08 and 09 December, 2014 (Note: Subsequent discussions on availability of the Board Chair indicate that the most likely dates to hold the Board Retreat may be 1-2 December. The Secretariat will communicate to the Board as soon as firm dates are identified. It is proposed that the meeting commences around lunchtime on Monday 08 December, 2014, and for the whole day on Tuesday, 09 December, 2014.

The meeting will take place in Geneva, Switzerland.Update on constituencies definitions and members rotation

Each constituency was contacted to agree on the respective Board member rotations. Feedback is currently being received, with final results presented to the EC in due course.

*Actions:*

- Advert for the ED position to be shared with EC members for further distribution to their respective constituencies.
- Recruitment of new Executive Director to continue as proposed. Any feedback or questions on this process should be sent to FB.
- Secretariat to inform the Board of the agreed dates and location for the Board Retreat and Board meeting.
- Feedback on the proposed rotation and transition of Board members to be shared with the EC in due course.

**Financing**

The EC noted the memo from the meeting of the Finance Committee. The memo thanked the donor community for the financial support extended to the Partnership for 2013 and ongoing support in 2014, but also noted that all of the committed funding to date is aligned with the current strategy that ends in 2015. There are currently no funding commitments to support the work of the Partnership in 2016 onwards; a new strategy is required urgently, and not later that the first quarter of 2015, to underpin any fundraising efforts for 2016 onwards. The memo also noted the Finance Committee's concern that the funding uncertainty, unless resolved quickly, is likely to make it more difficult to recruit a new Executive Director and can potentially result in current Secretariat staff looking for other employment opportunities.

The EC agreed that the financial situation of the Partnership will be a key issue for potential candidates applying for the Executive Director position, especially as fund-raising is challenging and time consuming process. As such, it will be important to convey the fact that the Executive Committee, the Finance Committee and the Board are committed to supporting this process, in particular through the speedy development of the PMNCH post-2015 strategy.

The EC also agreed that whilst challenging, the Partnership has in the past managed to fundraise sufficient resources and that the EC was optimistic that this can be done again. There may also be the possibility of some donors being more open to providing resources for the transition period, and this can be discussed with those who have been strong supporters of the Partnership (such as the Gates Foundation, for example, who have also been closely involved in the PMNCH external evaluation process). EC was asked to think about other suggestions for donors who might provide support in a similar manner and to inform the Secretariat.

In addition, the EC recognised that the Partnership continues to have a high proportion of funding coming from a few donors (one of which has gone through a vast change in governance and as a result is proving more difficult to obtain funding from going forward).

It was also noted that the EC strongly believes that new strategy and proposed changes to the Partnership are a significant opportunity to build on PMNCH's successes to date, and that this message should be transmitted to all potential donors as they consider potentially funding PMNCH during its transitional period.

*Actions:*

- At its next meeting, EC to discuss processes for reaching out to donors to raise resources for 2016 onwards, and the possibility of mechanisms to help bridge the gap created by the transition process.
- EC members to provide suggestions of donors to approach for funding over the transition period.

## 3. Post-2015 PMNCH Strategy Development Process

- Comments on the Issues Paper and next steps

FB summarised the key questions in the Post-2015 Strategy Issues for Discussion paper shared in advance of the meeting. AdF noted that this document has been previously seen by the EC, it has been shared with the Board who provided comments during August, 2014, and has recently been shared with all of the membership for any further input by constituency groups.

In view of the Post-2015 Strategy Issues for Discussion paper and the development of the post-2015 strategy more generally, the EC raised the following issues that need to be taken into account as we move forward:

- How will the changes at the leadership of Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) affect the Partnership's strategic thinking, and should there be a move towards creating greater synergies with EWEC and therefore a larger platform for supporting the EWEC movement move generally.
- Define and more clearly articulate whether and how the Partnership could operate at the country level.
- Focus on other sectors outside of health. The relevant sectors for collaboration will be determined based on an analysis of risks, benefits and ways to engage with the sectors stakeholders. Education and nutrition were noted as two key sectors, although members suggested that other sectors (e.g. water and sanitation) should not be discarded.
- Ground any future work of the Partnership in evidence on what works.
- Reflect the strength of the Partnership in any new strategy. The new strategy and proposed changes should be designed to build on what exists within the Partnership already, rather than starting afresh.
- Determine the role of the Partnership in supporting the newly proposed Global Finance Facility.

With such a large and diverse partnership, building complete consensus on a post-2015 strategic framework will be very challenging. The danger is that a consensus led strategic framework will lack the clarity and focus that is needed to guide Partnership's activities in 2016 onwards. As such, the group discussed the importance of being pragmatic and if necessary moving forward without all stakeholders agreeing on all aspects of the strategy – it will be important to learn lessons from the 2012 to 2015 Strategic Framework in this regard.

AdF thanked the group for the discussion and proposed on behalf of the Secretariat to work with the constituency focal points to ensure these issues are discussed at the constituency level ahead of the

Board Retreat in December, 2014. He also noted that the procurement process for consultants to facilitate this process is coming to an end and that it is hoped to have consultants in place as early as possible in October, 2014.

*Actions:*

- JS and the Secretariat to develop the next version of the Post-2015 Strategy Issues for Discussion paper based on the feedback received from the EC and through the ongoing consultation process with the entire membership. The note will feed into the work of the consultants facilitating the development of the PMNCH post-2015 strategy.
- Secretariat to work with constituency focal points to ensure the issues raised above are discussed at the constituency level ahead of the Board Retreat in December, 2014.
- The Secretariat to lead on analysing the non-health sectors to be prioritised for potential collaborative action by the Partnership as part of the post-2015 strategy. This will be based on an analysis of the risks and benefits of focusing on a range of sectors, as well as holding consultations with sector stakeholders.
- The Secretariat to revitalize the RMNCH Financing Harmonisation Group, with representatives from each of the constituencies, to take forward PMNCH's potential role in supporting the newly proposed Global Financing Facility.

## 4. Board response to the PMNCH External Evaluation

The Board's Response to the external evaluation document was circulated to all constituency groups in August 2014 for comments. Feedback was incorporated into the document, as presented to the EC.

The EC recognised again the broadly positive feedback received by the Partnership from the external evaluation, and supported the actions to improve those areas where challenges were identified. In doing so, the EC noted that the timeline for implementing many of the recommendations should be moved further into the future, and only the most important ones to be focused on from now until April 2015.

The EC also noted that the evaluation described the majority of recommendations as high priority, the Partnership needs to be discerning about prioritising the most important activities. As such, in order to ensure that the tasks can be conducted thoroughly and properly it was agreed that recommendations some recommendations will have to be delayed until later in 2015 and potentially into 2016.

The EC agreed with the notion that at the moment there is too little interaction between different constituencies. Options to potentially change the current constituency-based structure should be placed on the table for further discussions. The Secretariat needs to be adequate resources and tools to deal with the growing demands of the membership, which will further help in strengthening the exchanges between constituencies.

*Actions:*

- Secretariat to revise the Board response to the PMNCH External Evaluation based on the feedback provided. A revised paper will be shared with the EC for a no-objection recommendation to the Board. It will then be sent to the Board for a no-objection approval. Once approved by the Board, this Board response along with the full evaluation will be published online.

- Secretariat to develop a revised timeline for implementing the evaluation recommendations, to be included in the Board's response.

## 5. Reflections on accountability: PMNCH 2014 Accountability Report

Given the limited time available, it was agreed that this agenda item would be postponed until the next EC meeting.

However, it was important to clarify that the suggested discontinuation of the PMNCH 2015 Accountability report did not reflect any change to the Partnership's role in promoting accountability for results, but that this may be replaced by a more sustainable mechanism and in collaboration with a broader range of partners.

*Actions:*

- Agenda item to be discussed at the next EC meeting.

## 6. AOB

At her last EC meeting, the group passed on their gratitude to CP for her work in leading the Secretariat into this exciting period. The group extended an invitation to CP to attend the Board strategy retreat in December 2014, where her inputs on the important forward looking issues of the Partnership will be highly valued.

No other business was raised by the EC members.