

HOLDING THE WORLD TO ITS PROMISES

A new framework for tracking commitments and investments towards MDGs 4&5

Introduction

Each year, governments and international donor organizations pledge large amounts to support the objectives of the Millennium Development Goals 4&5 (MDGs 4&5). Almost without exception, these pledges are made in good faith, in the expectation that the money and resources pledged will benefit the people who need them most – mothers, infants and children living in poverty.

However, there is a problem. Numerous factors may combine to obscure the path between the initial commitment – often made verbally by a head of state or senior minister at an international gathering – and the delivery and application of funds in the field. While these commitments are recorded in press releases and media reports at the time, they then often “disappear off the radar” for months or even years. Inevitably, it can be very difficult for the aid community to ascertain whether commitments made towards MNCH causes are eventually met, and if so what positive impact they are having on the lives of mothers and children.

To counter this problem, the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH) is planning a new framework (see Annex 2) to track commitments and investments towards MDGs 4&5. This is in line with its agreed priority actions for 2009-2011 (priority action 6).

Scope of work and objectives

The framework will track information on financial pledges made towards MNCH programs. It will employ a robust methodology to collect, analyze, and disseminate information on national and international pledges, commitments, and disbursements.

A key objective will be to establish the use and impact of these funds and how they further progress towards MDGs 4&5. National and international trends of funding for MNCH programs will be assessed to evaluate changes in these trends. All interested partners will be invited to work under the common framework, to bring greater coherence to global efforts to track MNCH funding (see Annex 1).

Outputs and timescales

An interactive IT system will be developed to provide a repository for data, and to function as a tool to aid analysis. It will be used to generate knowledge summaries and policy briefs in a range of reporting formats, which will be made available to the public and policy-makers through a variety of media. Authorized users will be able to access the system through the PMNCH website. Useable information will become available within the first year of operations. The project is expected to last until 2015.



Annex I

Existing work to track MNCH commitments¹

Although many organizations systematically track commitments to health causes, relatively few track specifically for MNCH. A critical gap has been the lack of data on government disbursements on MNCH programs. This evidence gap is being addressed through the Financing Working Group of "Countdown to 2015 - Tracking Progress in Maternal, Newborn and Child Survival".²

Partners known to be already working on specific areas covered by the proposed PMNCH framework include the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (estimating Official Development Assistance [ODA] disbursements to MNCH³); the World Health Organization and the Institute for Health Policy, Sri Lanka; the World Bank; and the ONE Campaign⁴ (tracking pledges for MNCH from the G8 countries and publishing the annual ONE DATA Report⁵). The Kaiser Family Foundation focuses its research and data gathering on the US and its role in global health policy and international development assistance.⁶

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) tracks commitments to health and other sectors from its 30 member countries through the Development Assistance Committee (DAC).⁷ In addition, WHO, USAID and other partners produce National Health Accounts (NHA).⁸ NHAs can be used to establish trends in expenditure on MNCH, but this work has not been given adequate focus or resources to date.

¹ Different definitions exist of what 'commitments mean'. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) uses the following definition: A firm obligation, expressed in writing and backed by the necessary funds, undertaken by an official donor to provide specified assistance to a recipient country or a multilateral organization. Other organizations define it as a verbal or written commitment, which is not stating a particular amount and/or is not backed by budgets. Attempts will be made to track both.

² <http://www.countdown2015mnch.org/>

³ [http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736\(08\)60561-9/abstract](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140-6736(08)60561-9/abstract)

⁴ <http://one.org/international/datareport2009/>

⁵ <http://www.one.org/international/datareport2009/>

⁶ <http://facts.kff.org/>

⁷ http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_33721_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

⁸ <http://www.who.int/nha/en/>

Annex 2 - A working framework for a system to track pledges, commitments, and disbursement of funds to MDGs 4&5

TYPE OF ACTIVITY TRACKED	ODA	National governments	Private sector	Data produced	Products	How will this component support achievement of objectives?	Policy relevance
Pledges (statements)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Verbal and written G8 statements⁹ Other donors (analysis to be done) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track declarations by high-level policy makers (e.g. Abuja declaration, others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Track high -profile private sector investors (e.g. foundations, NGOs and faith-based organizations) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on pledges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data sheets Policy briefs Presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provides data for holding donors, governments, and private sector, accountable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data for governments and other stakeholders (e.g. parliaments) to hold donors accountable Data for national planning purposes (e.g. national funding gap for MNCH)
Commitments (firm pledges)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSHTM¹⁰ ongoing analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> World Bank: Public Expenditure Tracking NHA¹¹ Institute for Health Policy, Sri Lanka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on pledges from verbal and written statements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on commitments 			
Disbursements (funds transferred)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> LSHTM ongoing analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHA Institute for Health Policy, Sri Lanka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on disbursements 			
Use of funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHA (wherever available for child/repro-ductive health) Institute for Health Policy, Sri Lanka 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NHA (wherever available for child/repro-ductive health) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annual reports 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data on use of funds (e.g. on impact of OOP¹² and health insurance and other social protection mechanisms) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website alerts Tracking ticker 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures effectiveness and efficiency of use of funds, including of OOP and impact on poverty of households 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measure poverty impact of OOP Measure effectiveness of social protection mechanisms Measure efficiency of use of funds (e.g. through prioritization exercises)
Impact (utilization and health outcomes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Subsequent analysis (methodology to be defined) 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on utilization Impact on mortality 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Measures impact on utilization and health outcomes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not applicable

⁹ Other sources include the ONE DATA report, the OECD, and the Kaiser Family Foundation (see Annex 1)

¹⁰ London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine

¹¹ National Health Accounts

¹² Out of pocket