GUIDANCE FOR MAKING A COMMITMENT TO THE PMNCH CALL TO ACTION ON COVID-19

What is a commitment?

Commitments in support of PMNCH’s Call to Action on COVID-19 are financial, policy and/or service delivery pledges by partner governments, including donor governments, to advance the health of women, children and adolescents in the context of the response to COVID-19. To align with the goals of the PMNCH COVID-19 Call to Action campaign, commitments adhere to written guidelines. Commitments are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound (SMART), responding to one or more of the seven asks of the Call to Action:

1. Ensuring access to information, health services and life-saving supplies for women, children and adolescents;
2. Promoting sexual and reproductive rights and gender equality;
3. Guaranteeing quality, respectful and dignified health care;
4. Providing training, equal and fair pay and safe working conditions for health workers, notably midwives and nurses;
5. Ensuring social protection, including food and nutrition, for marginalized and vulnerable groups;
6. Improving access to safe and clean water, toilets and handwashing facilities;
7. Preventing violence against women, children and adolescents.

In submitting a commitment, partner governments agree their commitment will contribute to the overall aim of the Call to Action campaign to increase visibility and public attention to the needs and response to women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health in relation to COVID-19 and increase multi-stakeholder support. Partner governments agree that PMNCH may, in presenting their commitment, aggregate it with those of other governments to generate visibility and attention, including through media/communication efforts.

Aligning the commitment with existing initiatives and efforts

Governments are encouraged to submit new and additional commitments where possible. However, existing on-record commitments are also possible to submit if they align with the goals of the Call to Action, since this will increase visible and enable greater awareness and multi-stakeholder support for implementation. PMNCH also seeks to align with the commitment outreach efforts of other aligned campaigns. For example, governments may submit commitments to PMNCH that they have already pledged in relation to:

- Protecting and investing in health and care workers to accelerate the attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals and COVID-19 recovery as part of the International Year of Health and Care Workers;
- Ensuring that within the first 100 days of the year 2021, vaccination of health workers and older people is underway in all countries as part of the Vaccine Equity Declaration;
- Supporting specific women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health-related initiatives, including the PMNCH Call to for adolescents’ well-being, Generation Equality, FP2030, Nutrition for Growth and similar.

What kind of commitments are encouraged?

Commitments can be categorized under the following themes:

- Financial – commitments aimed at mobilizing domestic resources, or supporting key actors in a country to implement plans to improve the health of women and children;
- Policy – commitments aimed at developing appropriate processes and supporting advocacy to ensure women’s and children’s rights and access to health; and
- Service and delivery – commitments aimed to ensure that women and children have access to life-saving prevention, treatment and care when and where they need it and support health systems strengthening.
Identifying priorities for the commitments

Commitments must respond explicitly to COVID-19, ensuring for least the 24-month length of the campaign or longer. Financial commitments may be based on new and additional funds, or recently re-programmed/re-purposed funds supporting the objectives of the Call to Action. Commitments are required to be context-specific (SMART) and aim to achieve concrete and focused results which can easily be monitored to ensure future tracking on implementation and accountability.

What is a SMART commitment?

Think SMART when developing and formulating commitments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S</th>
<th>Specific</th>
<th>The commitment refers to a specific action (financial, policy and/or service delivery) and indicates the population group who will benefit from the action.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>Measurable</td>
<td>The commitment can be monitored through (a set of) an indicator(s) to enable its progress and achievement to be tracked.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Achievable</td>
<td>The commitment refers to a realistic context, based on availability of human and financial resources as well as level of progress achieved in the past.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R</td>
<td>Relevant</td>
<td>The commitment reflects a country’s situation, national priorities and the challenges it faces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>T</td>
<td>Time-bound</td>
<td>The commitment’s key milestone is to be met within a realistic timeframe for achievement.</td>
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Example of SMART financial commitments

− $xx increase in domestic financing to ensure provision and access to health services and life-saving supplies for women, children and adolescents as part of the COVID-19 response and recovery by 2021 [PMNCH Call to Action #1 + #6]

Examples of SMART policy and service delivery commitments

− $xx invested in providing functional and clean toilet and handwashing facilities, with emphasis on centres for refugees and internally displaced people by 2021 [PMNCH Call to Action #6]
− $xx allocated to address violence against women and children (e.g., $xx to increase functional safe houses); $xx for social protection for migrant workers, including access to free transportation, nutrition, maternal health services, shelters by 2021 [PMNCH Call to Action Asks #5 + #7]
− Review of national policies, strategies and financing for adolescent and youth sexual and reproductive health (AYSRH) to ensure that the interventions targeting young people are responsive to their needs; meaningful inclusion of youth in accountability mechanism to plan, track implementation and validate results by 2022 [PMNCH Call to Action Asks #2 + #5]
− Re-establish obstetric care services in X number/percentage of hospitals in high population density areas and ensure referral mechanisms for care in these areas by 2022; increase funding for SRMNH by $xx, including earmarking for indigenous women’s health homes by 2021 [PMNCH Call to Action Asks #3 + #5]
− Increase domestic funding by xx% to the National Action Plan for WASH in the 2021 budget; legislative commitment for implementation of the Violence Against Persons Prohibition Act of 2015 across all states by 2021 [PMNCH Call to Action Asks #6 + #7]

Commitments by countries already announced in alignment with the Call to Action on COVID-19 can be accessed here.
Recommended steps to drafting a SMART commitment

✓ Review current priorities in national COVID-19 response plans and related actions in order to convert existing commitments into SMART commitments for action ensuring the health and rights of women, children and adolescents are protected;
✓ Assess the current budget allocations for COVID-19 response measures across multiple sectors, and ensure existing financial commitments to women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health programmes through stronger health systems are ring-fenced;
✓ Earmark context-specific COVID-19 allocations and stimulus packages for women, children and adolescents that help achieve gender equality goals;
✓ Evaluate and identify specific and targeted policy measures across multiple sectors that can tackle gaps and inequities made visible by the COVID-19 crisis;
✓ Where possible collate plans and allocations across lines ministries to present a comprehensive view on how the government is undertaking a whole-of-society approach to meet the needs of WCAH during the COVID-19 pandemic;
✓ Draft a short statement on how these actions align with, and support, one or more of the 7 action areas of the PMNCH Call to Action on COVID-19;

How to make a commitment?

Commitments should be sent, in writing, through a brief statement to Helga Fogstad, Executive Director of PMNCH at fogstadh@who.int with copy to Thahira Mustafa, Technical Officer at mustafat@who.int. While formulating the commitment, kindly indicate how your commitment is aligned with the specific key asks of the PMNCH Call to Action on COVID-19. The deadline for submitting a commitment is **21 August 2021**.

In joining this effort, commitment-makers agree that PMNCH will amplify and publicize their commitments in the context of the PMNCH Call to Action on COVID-19, and that financial pledges may be aggregated with those of other commitment-makers to demonstrate the scale of action being undertaken, and to encourage others to join.

Should you have any questions or require any support in regard to the commitment process, please contact Thahira Mustafa at mustafat@who.int.

PMNCH support for your commitment

PMNCH will support governments in the dissemination and implementation of their commitments through the efforts of its 1,000 member-organization network, bringing together civil society, private business, the United Nations, health professional organizations, youth groups, donors organizations, and others. All commitments will be publicized through a global press campaign, preparation of tailored communication packs for national dissemination, and invited for presentation in September alongside the United Nations General Assembly 2021. Following the launch, through a coordinated 24-month campaign, PMNCH will provide national support to partners via small grants including civil society organizations, adolescent and youth coalitions, parliamentarians and others based in commitment-making countries to encourage inclusive, national multi-stakeholder dialogue and operational support for monitoring and following up commitments, including through information webinars, capacity-building workshops, and coordination meetings.