

Sustainable and harmonized reporting platform for tracking financial and non-financial commitments to Every Woman Every Child initiative

Decision by the Executive Committee

- Approve the proposed approach to developing a unified accountability platform, in coordination with Every Woman Every Child.
- Approve use of remaining funds (USD 100,000) in the allocated budget for this activity (subject to fund raising closing the remaining gap) through pooling of financial and human resources with other initiatives.

Background to the challenge

Since the UN Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health¹ was launched in 2010, partners have made commitments and are continuing to make new commitments aimed at improving women's and children's health through addressing specific needs outlined in the Global Strategy.

In order to support the implementation of the Global Strategy, and move closer towards its aim of saving 16 million lives, it is important to ensure that information flows into existing accountability processes are structured in a sustainable and harmonised manner. To date, a number of different information collection workstreams has emerge, each of which is contacting commitment makers annually or otherwise, seeking information on progress related to implementation of their respective commitments to the Global Strategy. This has resulted in commitment makers facing multiple data collection requests asking for similar information but by using different methods and survey approaches. Data collection is a time consuming, labour intensive task, and having several initiatives performing this activity adds to the reporting burden.

This welcome energy to ensure that commitments to the Global Strategy are implemented is reflected in the work associated with initiatives such as The follow-up Commission on Information and Accountability (COIA) for Women's and Children's Health, the independent Expert Review Group (iERG) on Women's and Children's Health, Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH), Family Planning (FP) 2020. Simultaneously, The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Development Co-operation Directorate (DCD-DAC), Creditor Reporting System (CRS) will start collecting data on overseas development assistance (commitments and disbursements) in support of reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health (RMNCH) through a policy marker for 2014 reporting on 2013 flows from their members. The recommendation and funding to develop the policy marker to monitor the financial parts came from COIA.

Proposed solution – a joint web-based commitment tracking platform

It is proposed that a more centralised approach is piloted as a means to harmonize and integrate efforts to track commitments made for the Global Strategy, at the global and country level. Such an approach is expected to reduce fragmentation of initiatives collecting information from committer's as it would keep all tracking initiatives and activities together under the same umbrella, which will reduce the reporting burden for partners, and result in improved quality data.²

¹ http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/images/content/files/global_strategy/full/20100914_gswch_en.pdf

² Over the last year and a half, the WHO has been successful in its efforts to harmonize donors and health initiatives both in country and at the global level of tracking of flows of health expenditures through the application of a standard platform, namely Systems of Health Accounts 2011 (SHA 2011) framework. An opportunity is therefore presented to learn from this experience, and explore which partners have signed up to this harmonized approach since it is a likely that many of the partners would be the same as for this activity.

There is now an opportunity for Every Woman Every Child³ to potentially host, together with PMNCH and other partners, a single harmonized, integrated online platform that will be the global standard and depository of information related to reporting on commitments to the Global Strategy. This is an opportunity to synergize the commitments tracking work of the different initiatives using a single platform. The ambition to have post-2015 development agenda include a continued emphasis on women and children as one of the continued development goals also necessitates better tracking of its commitments as early as possible to establish a sound baseline.

The proposed approach would be to set up an online platform, building on the Every Woman Every Child website, to encourage regular reporting and transparency. Those participating in this endeavour would combine resources – financial and human – towards the development of a single, overarching accountability web platform that would collect all commitments to EWEC in one place⁴. There are several advantages of setting up such a harmonized tracking platform:

- It is more technically rigorous in that there will be a standard way to report commitments.
- The use of a consistent survey instruments, and data base, ensures comparability of data over time.
- It will minimize multiple parallel data collection initiatives that are labour intensive and time consuming for national staff and all other stakeholders. It will make the reporting at more regular, consistent intervals, and should reduce errors, allowing the process to focus more on the reporting of data and its use.
- It is expected to reduce fragmentation of data collection as partners will be able to access and use the information.

Next steps

- To set up a small working group of partners working on commitment tracking and reporting (e.g. PMNCH, FP2020, UNF, EOSG, others), which will meet regularly and develop this concept note and its terms of references further and keep each other updated and explore opportunities for collaboration.
- Take the project forward by operationalize terms of references, through pooling of resources.
- Update the Executive Committee on progress.

³ <http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/>

⁴ Given OECD effort on tracking financial commitments it will be key to have a close dialogue with the Statistics and Development Finance Division so to best align and harmonize the new platform so to not create duplication in any way.