OPPORTUNITIES FOR CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR WOMEN’S, CHILDREN’S AND ADOLESCENTS’ HEALTH
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As we move into a post-2015 development era, there is much optimism for real action on reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH). Both the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ health 2016-2030 (Global Strategy) commit leaders to press this agenda forward with renewed momentum underpinned by systems for accountability.

Effective mechanisms for true accountability to citizens are central to ensuring that health and human rights standards are respected, protected and fulfilled. These mechanisms must provide for the active input of citizens into global, national and local institutions. This a right and it is essential as a means of galvanizing the political will needed to deliver on the ambitious agenda and, ultimately, improving the quality and access of services for women and children.

Rhetoric toward more inclusive approaches has been growing in recent years, but it has not gone far enough. While many commitments have been made, governments and global development partners have failed to invest sufficiently in citizen-inclusive accountability. Now these commitments must be realised.

This paper was developed to understand the current citizen-inclusive accountability landscape to inform a campaign planning workshop for a coalition of civil society organisations (CSOs) in 2016. It aims to support CSOs by providing an overview of the opportunities for citizen-inclusive accountability in two key global frameworks with commitments for RMNCAH – the SDGs and Global Strategy – by examining the existing provisions and recommendations from relevant agreements by key institutions relating to each. It then draws together these findings to assess the extent to which the SDGs and Global Strategy provides for and recommends citizen-inclusive accountability.

The paper highlights that formal provisions and recommendations have been laid for citizen inclusive accountability by key institutions relating to the SDGs and Global Strategy frameworks on multiple fronts, however, renewed advocacy efforts and partnerships are necessary to ensure they are realised in practice.
In September 2015, the new United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health 2016-2030 (Global Strategy) set out a vision to end preventable maternal, newborn, and child deaths and to ensure universal health coverage by 2030.¹

These global frameworks recommitted the international community to address reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health (RMNCAH), and defined key platforms to increase accountability for meeting the agreed goals and targets. Agenda 2030, which provides the vision for the SDGs, affirms that “Governments have the primary responsibility for follow-up and review, at the national, regional and global levels” for the goals over the coming fifteen years, and that in order to “support accountability to our citizens, we will provide for systematic follow-up and review at the various levels”.² Similarly, the Global Strategy has recognised that, “A rigorous system of accountability” is needed to track progress towards its targets, and to provide decision-makers with the information they need to inform planning and investment for women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health.³

The drive for greater accountability has been championed by civil society for decades, with a recent focus on the post-2015 development apparatus, which sets global development priorities for the next fifteen years. Ensuring these new global frameworks engender strong monitoring, review and implementation frameworks at national, regional and global levels is an urgent priority to guarantee that citizens around the world get the maximum benefits of new development investments.

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² Ibid, 47.
Accountability involves several key components: from monitoring and transparency, through to answerability which requires decision-makers to justify decisions to the general public.\(^4\) To be effective, accountability should include elements of ‘enforceability’ which should be applied when decision-makers and other public actors violate their duties – whether legal, regulatory or in terms of public opinion.\(^5\) Clear delimitation of responsibilities – the requirement that all positions of authority should have clearly defined duties and performance standards - is also critical in order for their conduct to be transparently and objectively assessed.

The Commission on Information and Accountability (CoIA) to the first Global Strategy similarly identified three interconnected stages of “monitor, review and act” as part of the accountability process, which has been reaffirmed by the new Independent Accountability Panel to the updated Global Strategy as “monitor, review, act and remedy”.\(^6\) Accountability goes beyond governments, from intergovernmental organizations to multilateral institutions, private actors and development partners.\(^7\)

Recent developments in information and communication technologies and increasing internet coverage have great potential to enrich the transfer, compilation, analysis and dissemination of data from country health information systems.\(^8\) Such political and technological advances have the potential to drive better monitoring and accountability of progress for RMNCAH and more effective implementation by governments. To achieve this, accountability must not purely be conceived as a technocratic process of monitoring global goals and targets.\(^9\) Rather, full accountability requires institutions to effectively undertake the full process from monitoring though to the review, act and remedy stages.

It is critical that these institutions for accountability build in measures which enable citizens to exercise their rights and constraints on power. Citizen voice is essential to ensure health systems are responsive to the needs of those they are intended to serve.\(^10\) For accountability to work to improve implementation it must therefore be people-centered and thus transform power relations. Guidance on the application of a human rights based approach by the Office of the High

\(^{7}\) Ibid, p 42.
\(^{8}\) H6 Partnership, 'Monitoring Priorities for the Global Strategy', p 14.
\(^{10}\) Freedman et al, 'Act global, but think local: accountability at the frontlines', Reproductive Health Matters, Volume 21, Issue 42, November 2013, Pages 103–112.
Commissioner for Human Rights, calls for accountability to be “fundamental to each stage of the process” of planning, to allocation of resources, to “feedback from the ground through to implementation in practice.”  

While the new global frameworks are important, the divergence between the way problems and solutions are framed at the global level and the reality at local levels serves as a reminder that accountability must start with communities themselves if it is to address the dynamics that operate at the local level around accessing RMNCAH services. Anchoring these frameworks though effective accountability mechanisms is therefore paramount.  

**CITIZENS’ RIGHT TO PARTICIPATION IN ACCOUNTABILITY**

Effective mechanisms for accountability are central to ensuring that health and human rights standards are respected, protected and fulfilled and ensure that actions, decisions, programs, and policies made by governments, decision-makers and other duty bearers are implemented effectively and respond to the communities they aim to benefit.

Citizens have a right to be included within accountability processes relating to health care and service delivery. Participation in all stages of development is grounded in the first article of both the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR), which emphasises the right to participation in public affairs and the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR), which states that all peoples have the right to self-determination and that “by virtue of that right they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”

*Consumer-inclusive accountability* – whereby citizens can play a meaningful role across the ‘monitor, review, act and repair’ stages of accountability – it must thus be a central component of accountability in the new development era. In addition to the rights-based case for citizen-inclusive accountability, citizens’ participation in accountability mechanisms can also play a vital role in helping to identify barriers and bottlenecks in health systems and thus enable governments to respond to accelerate progress and address the rights of women, children and adolescents.

*Citizen-inclusive accountability* as defined here, encompasses two primary and connected routes.

11 Ibid.
12 Ibid.
(1) The first route refers to *citizen-led accountability* or *social accountability* initiatives. These initiatives put citizens at the centre of the accountability process, for example through direct monitoring, tracking or reporting on service provision. In many cases, this work is facilitated by civil society organizations, operating in parallel to formal accountability process. In other, albeit less common cases, these initiatives are facilitated by the government itself, or via some sort of cooperative arrangement with a government accountability institution. Social accountability methods or tools included in this route include community scorecards, citizen’s hearings, social audits, social monitoring, citizen/civil society budget analysis, public expenditure tracking, community maternal death reviews, amongst many other methodologies and tools. These are typically initiatives which seek to put citizens and civil society at the centre of the accountability process.

As social accountability within health care systems includes a range of stakeholders from health ministers, public and private providers, legislatures, finance ministries, to regulatory agencies, and health boards, it operates at two levels. The first of these is at the ‘systems level’ where policy decisions and institutional arrangements affect how human and financial resources are allocated and used. The second level is at the ‘service level’, where the interface between the infrastructure, client, and provider determines the quality of services provided to the client.\(^{15}\)

\[^{15}\text{Boydell et al, Social Accountability: What are the Lessons for Improving Family Planning and Reproductive Health Programs, 2014 p.14}\]
(2) The second route is where citizens are 'invited' to participate in the formal accountability mechanisms or processes such as local, district or national health oversight institutions, providing input, testimonies, reports or evidence to independent accountability institutions or electoral bodies, such as parliamentary health committees. The extent and degree of this role, as well as its legitimacy, can depend greatly on whether those in charge of the formal mechanisms are merely seeking to 'check a box' for citizen engagement, or whether there is political will for meaningful engagement of citizens and civil society, which can result in much more meaningful spaces of interaction and participation.

Such citizen engagement and participation in formal accountability initiatives and the invitation of citizens to participate in formal spaces, can, and often do exist simultaneously, to citizen-led accountability initiatives, as grass-roots action can spur greater inclusion within government processes. In a best-case scenario, both the first and second route should coexist.

**IMPROVED POLICIES & HEALTH OUTCOMES**

**CITIZEN INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY IS A RIGHT AND IT IS IMPERATIVE TO IMPROVE HEALTH POLICIES SO THAT THEY REFLECT THE NEEDS AND DESIRES OF CITIZENS, WHICH IN TURN IMPROVES SERVICE DELIVERY AND HEALTH OUTCOMES.**

There is growing recognition that both technical and governance elements are necessary facets of strengthening public services.\(^\text{16}\) Social accountability interventions are considered to help reduce the misuse of public resources, staff vacancies, poor infrastructure, and ensuring that resources are used per legal procedures and professional standards. As such, health policy increasingly recognises social accountability as a means of improving quality of services and increasing the uptake of services.\(^\text{17}\)

Although much evidence on the effectiveness of social accountability in health focuses on pilot projects or uses research designs that are not able to attribute outcomes to specific interventions, new studies have begun to document clear outcomes on the success of community monitoring on increasing the utilisation of rural health services.\(^\text{18}\) Several studies have been conducted over recent years to review necessary factors for social accountability initiatives to have a successful impact on health provider responsiveness. These have identified the influence of health system factors (such as nature of competition between health providers, level of provider autonomy, relative importance of community priorities and relative importance of social accountability), relevance of broader contextual histories of citizen-state engagement, and experiences with activism and the presence and quality of ‘voice’ of citizens within local politics, the existence of

\(^\text{17}\) Boydell et al, ‘Social Accountability’, p 8.
\(^\text{18}\) Ibid, p 14.
clear linkages to redress and remedy mechanisms and importance of enabling factors that ensure citizens are able to act on clear information.19

**CITIZEN-LED ACCOUNTABILITY IN A POST-2015 ERA**

Progress toward achieving more inclusive approaches to accountability has been made in recent years, particularly in the form of new commitments and standards. The CoIA for the first Global Strategy for Women's and Children’s Health called for countries to have “transparent and inclusive national accountability mechanisms.” By 2016, 54 countries reported undertaking an annual, mid-term review or similar process.20 In addition, the CoIA included a recommendation around accessibility of information sharing, that by 2013, “stakeholders publicly sharing information on commitments, resources and results achieved annually, at both national and international levels.” By 2016, it notes, that 27 countries had organized civil society hearings on women's, children's, and adolescents' health in recognition of the importance of these parallel processes.

However, such progress has not yet gone far enough. While many commitments have been made, governments and global development partners have failed to invest sufficiently in citizen-inclusive accountability. Without a meaningful financial commitment and real avenues for citizen-generated evidence to be supplied to institutions with real “teeth” for action – citizens continue to have limited impact on the outcomes of national and global health services delivery. As the post-2015 development era has ushered in new institutional structures and review processes, this progress must continue at the country level to provide the backbone for a new global accountability apparatus. Now is the time to demand these changes and move from rhetoric to action.

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CITIZENS’ HEARINGS FOR RMNCAH

With the knowledge of this gap, International Planned Parenthood Federation, PMNCH, Save the Children, White Ribbon Alliance and World Vision have been working for the past two years to promote citizen-led accountability at local, national and global levels for RMNCAH. The coalition has done this through a coordinated effort to use “citizen's hearings” – a social accountability tool – in villages, districts and capital cities.

In 2015 the hearings engaged tens of thousands of citizens in Africa and Asia, specifically in Bangladesh, Cambodia, Ghana, India, Indonesia, Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, South Africa, Uganda, Tanzania, and Zambia. In 2016, Citizens’ Hearings were held in Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Ghana, Indonesia, Kenya, Mali, Malawi, Mauritania, Sierra Leone, Sudan and Zimbabwe.

Citizens’ hearings – much like other social accountability methods – seek to bring all the relevant stakeholders together to discuss the status of RMNCAH service delivery in a locality. By convening health workers, local leaders, citizens, and key decision makers to collectively discuss and identify problems, and to seek solutions, the hearings are one method to provide a space for citizens to participate in setting priorities and in monitoring and reviewing progress for reproductive, maternal, newborn, child and adolescent health. The hearings have brought together an impressive and diverse set of stakeholders and broken down the barriers between them: citizens and civil society have joined together with journalists, parliamentarians, health professionals, faith leaders, civil servants and administrators, local leaders, health ministers, education ministers, foreign ministers and prime ministers, to work together through a collaborative and open process on the way forward for RMNCAH. In this way Citizens’ Hearings serve the dual purpose of equipping citizens to know their rights and provide a platform for them to strategize with local authorities or government on effective methods to end the preventable deaths of women, newborns, children and adolescents. The hearings facilitate evidence-based, solution-oriented discussions as part of an open and collaborative dialogue between different stakeholders and proved to be an important
space for citizens and decision makers to collectively identify priorities for the SDGs and Global Strategy.

Beyond serving as a social accountability mechanism at the local level, findings from citizen’s hearings in some countries have informed higher policy levels, helping to identify and advocate for national and regional-level resolutions. In other places, work on citizen’s hearings has been integrated into longer term social accountability approaches (such as citizen voice and accountability) or as a tool for engaging citizen’s in larger advocacy campaigns, including to influence government policies or budget priorities and helping to increase the sustainable impact of these hearings.

In 2015 and 2016, the recommendations of the citizen’s hearings were also shared at the global level, through the organization of a “Global Citizen’s Dialogue” at the World Health Assembly. The Dialogue was organized by the coalition members and brought together members of the Independent Accountability Panel, NGOs, government delegations, ministers of health and UN agencies to listen to citizens and representatives of citizen hearings as they demanded increased engagement of citizens in accountability and health policy processes. This demand was documented in the recent Independent Accountability Panel report and continues to gain traction with the global community.

**BEYOND COMMITMENTS TO ACTION**

The global community has recognized the need for citizen-led accountability and citizen participation in monitoring, review and oversight of health service delivery. We must put the commitment into practice at local, national and global levels.

The launch of the SDGs and Global Strategy in 2015 marks a critical time to ensure that national implementation frameworks are drafted and reviewed in consultation with citizens and civil society. Key national and local processes such as elections, planning and budget cycles also provide opportunities to call on decision-makers to make further commitments to RMNCAH.

This paper provides an overview of the opportunities for citizen-inclusive accountability in two key global frameworks with commitments for RMNCAH – the Sustainable Development Goals, and the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health – by examining the existing provisions and recommendations from relevant agreements by key institutions relating to each. It also provides an assessment of the major areas of progress and additional possibilities for citizen-led accountability.
This section will explore the spaces for citizen-inclusive accountability in two key global frameworks with commitments for RMNCAH:

(i) the Sustainable Development Goals, and

(ii) the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health (2016-2030) at global, regional and national levels (launched as part of Every Woman, Every Child movement).

These frameworks were selected for review since they are the global frameworks which will guide the priorities for RMNCAH during the next fifteen-year period. While additional frameworks could also open opportunities for citizen-inclusive accountability in RMNCAH, these will not be explored here.

Taking each framework in turn, this section provides an overview of the provisions and the recommendations from agreements by key institutions as they relate to furthering citizen-inclusive accountability across the accountability cycle of “monitor, review, act and remedy”.

This review will be based on the latest formal documentation as of March 2017. Overall, the section identifies many existing commitments for civil society and citizen engagement.

Section three then draws together these findings to assess the extent to which the SDGs and Global Strategy include provisions and recommendations for citizen-inclusive accountability.

THE SDGS AND KEY INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development; the successor to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) in September 2015, became the main global framework for “people-centered,
universal and transformative" policies and practices across the economic, social and environmental spheres of development.\textsuperscript{21}

Its ambitious framework of 17 SDGs with 169 targets followed a global advocacy movement, various UN-led consultation efforts and intergovernmental negotiations, commencing with the appointment of a High-Level Panel of Eminent Persons by the United Nations Secretary-General (UNSG) in 2012. With a larger, more comprehensive agenda than the MDGs, the SDGs require sophisticated plans and specific measures for delivery at the national level.

Agenda 2030 reaffirmed that under the universal agenda each country has primary responsibility for its own economic and social development and that, “Cohesive nationally owned sustainable development strategies, supported by integrated national financing frameworks, will be at the heart of our efforts.” However, while it will “respect each country's policy space and leadership to implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development” it also noted that a “robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation and will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing this Agenda to ensure that no one is left behind.”\textsuperscript{22}

Agenda 2030 stated that follow-up and review processes would operate at national, regional and global levels to promote accountability to citizens and would abide by the following principles:

- They will be voluntary and country-led, will consider different national realities, capacities and levels of development and will respect policy space and priorities.

- As national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development, the outcome from national level processes will be the foundation for reviews at regional and global levels, given that the global review will be primarily based on national official data sources.

- They will track progress in implementing the universal Goals and targets, including the means of implementation.

- They will maintain a longer-term orientation, identify achievements, challenges, gaps and critical success factors and support countries in making informed policy choices.

- They will be open, inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support the reporting by all relevant stakeholders.


• They will be people-centred, gender-sensitive, respect human rights and have a focus on the poorest, most vulnerable and those furthest behind.

• They will build on existing platforms and processes, where these exist, avoid duplication and respond to national circumstances, capacities, needs and priorities. They will evolve over time, consider emerging issues and the development of new methodologies, and will minimise the reporting burden on national administrations.

• They will be rigorous and based on evidence, informed by country-led evaluations and data which is high-quality, accessible, timely, reliable and disaggregated by income, sex, age, race, ethnicity, migration status, disability and geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.\(^{23}\)

Governments committed to “fully engage in conducting regular and inclusive reviews of progress at sub-national, national, regional and global levels” and to harmonise follow up mechanisms by drawing as far as possible on the existing network of follow-up and review institutions and mechanisms. “National reports will allow assessments of progress and identify challenges at the regional and global level. Along with regional dialogues and global reviews, they will inform recommendations for follow-up at various levels.”\(^{24}\)

**THE SDG IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK**

The SDGs and the associated targets have a tracking system, which relies on official sources of government data, and which promises support to developing nations to help enhance the quality of the data they collect. Specifically, the SDGs and targets will be followed-up and reviewed using a set of global indicators developed by the UN Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators and which were agreed to “as a practical starting point,” at the forty-seventh session of the Statistical Commission in March 2016.\(^{25}\) These global indicators were further welcomed in the 2016 High Level Political Forum (HLPF) Ministerial Declaration which looks forward to the implementation and “continual improvement of the indicator framework in an inclusive and transparent manner.”\(^{26}\) This set of over 230 indicators is intended for the review of progress at the global level, creating a framework to compare countries around the world.\(^{27}\)

\(^{23}\) Ibid.

\(^{24}\) Ibid.


\(^{26}\) United Nations, Ministerial declaration of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development, 29 July 2016, para 16

\(^{27}\) see E/CN.3/2016/2/Rev.1, annex IV
addition, indicators for monitoring at the regional, national and subnational levels will also be developed by member states at the regional and national levels.\(^{28}\)

**SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS**

- Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere
- Goal 2. End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture
- Goal 3. Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages
- Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all
- Goal 5. Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls
- Goal 6. Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all
- Goal 7. Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all
- Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all
- Goal 9. Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation
- Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries
- Goal 11. Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable
- Goal 12. Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns
- Goal 13. Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts
- Goal 14. Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development
- Goal 15. Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss
- Goal 16. Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels
- Goal 17. Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

An annual SDG progress report will be prepared by the Secretary General in cooperation with the UN System, based on the global indicator framework and data produced by national statistical systems and information collected at the regional level. Progress against indicators will be calculated from national data collected by international agencies, based on their respective mandates and specialized expertise, from national statistical systems.\(^{29}\)


\(^{29}\) The national data are often adjusted for international comparability and, where lacking, estimations are made by international agencies: see United Nations Secretary General, ‘Progress Towards the Sustainable Development Goals’, June 2016, para 3.
In terms of reporting on progress against these indicators, the focus remains largely on government data, as opposed to citizen-based evidence. As such within Agenda 2030 governments commit to “support developing countries... in strengthening the capacity of national statistical offices and data systems to ensure access to high-quality, timely, reliable and disaggregated data.”

Beyond this, the 2016 Annual SDG Progress report recognises that tracking progress on the Sustainable Development Goals “requires the collection, processing, analysis and dissemination of an unprecedented amount of data ...including those derived from official statistical systems and from new and innovative data sources.” Governments did commit to the exploration of other data sources within Agenda 2030. Specifically, they agree to “promote transparent and accountable scaling-up of appropriate public-private cooperation to exploit the contribution to be made by a wide range of data, including earth observation and geo-spatial information, while ensuring national ownership in supporting and tracking progress.” However this commitment did not specify citizen-generated data.

Similarly, the UN Statistical Commission recognised that the development of a robust and high-quality indicator framework was a technical process that would require time and that refinements and improvements as new tools and data sources become available. The UNSG has also highlighted that, “new data sources and technologies for data collection will need to be explored, including through partnerships with civil society, the private sector and academia.”

GLOBAL LEVEL: HIGH LEVEL POLITICAL FORUM FOR THE SDGS

This sub-section will explore the role of the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) as the major global level institution mandated to help track progress toward the SDGs. The HLPF has a central role in overseeing the SDG follow-up and review processes at the global level to assess progress,
achievements and challenges faced by developed and developing countries as well as new and emerging issues. It is tasked to work with the General Assembly, Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and other relevant structures and forums, in accordance with existing mandates, and ensure effective linkages will be made with the follow-up and review arrangements of all relevant UN Conferences and processes.34

The HLPF is mandated to:

- Meet annually under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council, convened by the President of the Council for a period of eight days.35

- Carry out regular voluntary reviews which shall be “state-led, involving ministerial and other relevant high-level participants.” 36

- Conduct reviews to “provide a platform for partnerships, including through the participation of major groups and other relevant stakeholders” and therefore potentially include citizens or citizen representatives. Under the Ministerial Declaration to the 2016 HLPF session, governments agreed that “such reviews can promote the inclusive participation of all relevant stakeholders in its implementation, fostering national and subnational ownership and thus enhancing our efforts to ensure that no one is left behind.” 37 (see sub-section below).

- Conduct thematic reviews of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals, including cross-cutting issues supported by reviews by the ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental bodies and forums which should reflect the integrated nature of the goals as well as the inter-linkages between them. They will engage all relevant stakeholders and, where possible, feed into, and be aligned with, the cycle of the HLPF.

- (Under the auspices of the General Assembly) Meet every four years to provide high-level political guidance on the Agenda and its implementation, identify progress and emerging challenges and mobilize further actions to accelerate implementation. The next HLPF, under the auspices of the General Assembly, will take place in 2019, with the cycle of

36
37 United Nations, Ministerial declaration of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development, 29 July 2016, para 17.
meetings thus reset, to maximize coherence with the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review process.\textsuperscript{38}

The HLPF will support participation in follow-up and review processes by the Major Groups, formed at the 1992 Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, and other relevant stakeholders.\textsuperscript{39} This is one mechanism through which non-state actors are allowed input into the monitoring and review of progress toward meeting the SDGs. The Major Groups represent key sectors of society, including women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, NGOs, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, scientific and technological community and farmers.

Member States agreed that, while retaining the intergovernmental character of the forum, the representatives of the Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders shall be allowed:

1) To attend all official meetings of the forum
2) To have access to all official information and documents
3) To intervene in official meetings
4) To submit documents and present written and oral contributions
5) To make recommendations
6) To organize side events and discussions, in cooperation with Member States and the Secretariat.\textsuperscript{40}

The follow-up and review process at the HLPF will be informed by the annual SDG Progress Reports as noted above. The HLPF will also be informed by an additional Global Sustainable Development Report, which is envisaged to strengthen the science-policy interface and provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policy-makers in promoting poverty eradication and sustainable development.\textsuperscript{41}

The HLPF’s thematic reviews of progress on the SDGs, including cross-cutting issues, will be supported by several bodies, including the World Health Assembly (see section 2.2.2).\textsuperscript{42}

\textsuperscript{38} United Nations, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', 2015.
\textsuperscript{39} In line with Resolution 67/290.
\textsuperscript{40} United Nations, General Assembly Resolution A/RES/67/290, 23 August 2013.
In January 2016, the Secretary General presented the UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report to the UN General Assembly, which included propositions on how to put in place a “coherent, efficient and inclusive” follow-up and review system.

In the report, the UNSG proposed that Major Groups and other Stakeholders should be able to access HLPF documentation and provide comments and inputs through an online engagement platform to support and document the reviews of the HLPF and that their input should be actively solicited through calls for evidence and invitations to be presented at the forum. The UNSG also recommended that multi-stakeholder dialogues, such as those held during the negotiations on the 2030 Agenda, could be used more frequently within the scope of regular official meetings.

The UNSG further recommended that in addition to the position papers that Major Groups and other stakeholder constituencies submit to the forum annually, voluntary reports by non-governmental actors and partnerships to the HLPF could be supplemented by a more general report on the Major Group or other stakeholder’s aggregated contribution in a specific focus area. These various reports could be considered by the forum during a dedicated multi-stakeholder session. Additionally, within the 2030 Agenda major groups and other relevant stakeholders were called upon to report on their own contribution to implementation.

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43 The webcast, documents and content of the forum’s voluntary national reviews could be made available, along with the reports that countries have submitted to other reporting mechanisms. Countries would be able to upload summaries of their national and subnational reviews, related information, documents, comments or requests for advice. The platform will also highlight areas in which countries seek support in the form of resources, technology transfer, capacity development or partnerships, as well as record commitments made to respond to those needs. There could be a related dedicated space for major groups and other stakeholders to submit comments through a moderator from the Secretariat and/or major groups. See United Nations Secretary General, ‘Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level’, January 2016, A/70/684, http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/684&Lang=E para 86.

44 Ibid, para 67.


46 Ibid, para 105.
SUMMARY OF THE HLPF 2016 SESSION

The 2016 session focused on how to ensure that no one is left behind. Discussions topics included means of implementation, the science-policy interface, mainstreaming the Sustainable Development Goals and creating ownership at the national level, and regional experiences, delivering the 2030 Agenda for countries in special situations and the role of multi-stakeholder engagement for implementation. It also showcased 22 voluntary national reviews on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

It acknowledged that “Efforts are required to enhance the voice of all stakeholders in decision-making, by engaging in active outreach and providing adequate resources for the participation of stakeholders in relevant forums. Civil society has a critical role in pushing and delivering the 2030 Agenda. The high-level political forum has continued to build inclusiveness and transparency, engaging major groups and other stakeholders in its discussions and considering reports on their contribution to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda” and that “In order to review progress on the 2030 Agenda, enhancing efforts to collect and make disaggregated data more accessible will be critical.”

On the issue of inclusive accountability, the Ministerial Declaration from the 2016 HLPF session highlighted the importance of participatory and inclusive implementation, follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at all levels: “We acknowledge the primary responsibilities of Governments in this regard. We also acknowledge the contribution of parliaments, subnational governments and all other relevant stakeholders, including the private sector, civil society, academia and philanthropic organizations. Their participation supports accountability to our citizens and enhances the effectiveness of our action, fostering synergies, multi-stakeholder partnerships and international cooperation, and the exchange of best practices and mutual learning. We welcome the participation and contributions of major groups and other relevant stakeholders in the high-level political forum and encourage their continued engagement in ensuring that no one is left behind.”

On the broader enabling environment for citizen-led accountability, the 2016 Ministerial Declaration stresses that the importance of the availability and use of accessible, timely, reliable and high-quality disaggregated data underpins our efforts to leave no one behind by, inter alia, identifying inequalities, but notes that considering that the global review of the 2030 Agenda “will be based primarily on national official data sources” as opposed to citizen-based data sources.

It also noted that “Many countries reported that they have “nationalized” targets for the 2030 Agenda in their national strategies and plans, including financing strategies and institutional mechanisms. Local and subnational level governments will be critical for implementation and for developing road maps and guiding principles for coordination and monitoring at multiple levels.”

A total of 107 side events and 12 sustainable development learning courses were held on the margins of the formal meetings of the high-level political forum and were sponsored by a diverse group of stakeholders, including Governments agencies, funds and programmes of the United Nations system, international organizations and major groups.

One of the formal panels discussed ‘Multi-stakeholder approaches at the national level: the opportunity to enhance follow-up and review by engaging major groups and other stakeholders,’ with governments of Germany, Norway and Brazil represented on the panel.

Sources: Report of the high-level political forum on sustainable development, August 2016 (E/HLPF/2016/8); Ministerial declaration of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development’, 29 July 2016 (E/HLS/2016/1)
REGIONAL AND NATIONAL LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY INSTITUTIONS TO THE SDGS

The Agenda 2030 agreement noted that follow-up and review at regional and sub-regional levels can provide useful opportunities for peer learning (including through voluntary reviews) sharing of best practices and discussion on shared targets. The Ministerial Declaration to the 2016 HLPF session also recognises the “important role that regional and sub regional forums can have in supporting the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, including its follow-up and review process, by, inter alia, promoting peer learning and cooperation, including South-South and triangular cooperation as appropriate, and helping to link the national and global levels of implementation. In this regard, we welcome the identification, development and convening of appropriate regional and sub regional forums on sustainable development.”

Looking forward, the UNSG stresses that the main benefits of regional review activities - peer learning and assessments of progress and policies - must be felt at country and regional levels as these reviews, “…will allow for discussions on overall trends, gaps, lessons learned, best practices, and issues specific to the region — whether they relate to means of implementation, the thematic review or others — and boost regional cooperation and partnerships. Where gaps are noted, additional consultations could help to define appropriate responses.”

Further recognition of the importance of linkages between regional processes and national and global levels, is underlined in Agenda 2030, which states that “inclusive regional processes will draw on national-level reviews and contribute to follow-up and review at the global level, including at the HLPF.” The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report suggested that Regional reviews can help to keep track of how the conclusions of the HLPF reviews are being followed up.

The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report acknowledges that important progress has been achieved in various regions on the follow-up and review architecture, through the regional fora on sustainable development convened by UN regional commissions. In recognition of the downward and upward linkages of these UN regional commissions, other regional organizations, United Nations, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', 2015.

47 United Nations, 'Ministerial declaration of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development', 29 July 2016, para 18.
48 United Nations, 'Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level', January 2016, para 56.
50 United Nations Secretary General, 'Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level', January 2016, para 81.
In Asia, the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) convened the third session of the Asia-Pacific Forum on Sustainable Development (APFSD 2016) on 3-5 April 2016, at the UN Conference Centre in Bangkok, Thailand. It marked the first regional forum on sustainable development to take place following the adoption of the 2030 Agenda in September 2015, and shaped the regional response to the 2030 Agenda. The Forum engaged Member States, United Nations institutions and other institutions, Major Groups and other stakeholders on regional priorities for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific, reflecting ESCAP’s mandate for follow up and review. It also made recommendations on scientific and technological innovation for sustainable development and on making cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.

As requested by the second session of the Forum, the third session discussed a regional road map for implementing the 2030 Agenda in Asia and the Pacific. The Forum also agreed on its form, function and modalities after 2016. The conclusions and recommendations of the Forum help to strengthen national governments’ implementation efforts and were used to inform the global High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, in July 2016.

Source: https://www.unescap.org/events/apfsd3

In order to utilise existing follow-up and review mechanisms, Agenda 2030 encourages all member states to identify the most suitable regional forum in which to engage and for UN regional commissions to continue supporting member states.\footnote{Ibid, paras 56-59.} The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review report notes that there are several regions where peer review mechanisms exist which can provide potential valuable lessons which should be integrated into regional as well as national and global reviews to the HLPF:

“It is important that the United Nations regional commissions and other regional organizations continue to work closely together and build on each other’s work. The outcomes of reviews conducted in regional forums may be provided to the high-level political forum in an aggregated form. Countries that have undergone peer or other reviews at the regional level could be encouraged to use them in their preparation for national reviews at the forum.”\footnote{United Nations, ‘Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development’, 2015.}

Examples of relevant peer review mechanisms include the African Peer Review Mechanism, the peer reviews of the Pacific Island Forum and the Organization for Economic Cooperation Development initiative, which already cover many thematic aspects of the 2030 Agenda.

\footnote{United Nations Secretary General, ‘Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level’, January 2016, paras 58 and 59.}
of such platforms outside the United Nations can strengthen global follow-up and review and reflect the universal nature of the Agenda." 55

While the primary responsibility for implementation is at the national level, action at international and regional levels will also be important. Specific mechanisms for SDGs within regional institutions can play a key role in this regard. For example, the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC)’s Sustainable Development Observatory (SDO) to the EU has proposed a mechanism for citizen participation. Specifically, in June 2016, the SDO proposed the formation of a European Sustainable Development Forum,’ noting the Forum should be:

“...as inclusive as possible without compromising efficiency, involve high-level participants from the European Commission and invite representatives from the Council of the EU and the Parliament. It should be managed by a board with most members from civil society and stakeholder organisations and some members from the Commission and the EESC itself. The Forum must be well embedded in the processes of SDG implementation, monitoring and review. It should be organised as a continuous working process and serve as a platform to discuss the design, set-up and arrangements of the EU framework for SDG implementation.” 56

A 2015 report by the EU NGO Stakeholder Forum, which was commissioned to make recommendations on the EU-wide implementation of the SDG agenda, as part of the EESC review process, recommended that a potential European Sustainable Development Forum mechanism for Agenda 2030 should meet on a regular and continuing basis throughout the long haul of implementing, monitoring and review of the SDGs on “...an open and inclusive basis, and enable everyone concerned to be constructively and creatively engaged with the other European Institutions in one of the central challenges for the world and for Europe in the years ahead.” 57 The EU NGO Stakeholder Forum further argues that monitoring progress of the SDGs at the EU level will need to be well-integrated with monitoring at the member state level, should support a continuing dialogue between the two levels about how progress can best be maintained and should link up with stakeholder groupings at the national level to co-ordinate views on key issues.58

55 Ibid, para 61.
57 Report of a Study by Stakeholder Forum for the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), ‘Building the Europe We Want Models for civil society involvement in the implementation of the Post-2015 agenda at the EU level’, June 2015.
58 Ibid, p 37.
Asia Pacific Regional CSO Engagement Mechanism (RCEM)

The RCEM derives from engagement experiences in processes leading up to the 2012 Rio+20 conference on sustainable development. A group of Asia-Pacific regional CSOs, who had been cooperating in this context, came together to share experiences from their engagement in the process leading up to the development of the SDGs. Looking forward to the implementation of the SDGs, a Regional Coordination Committee (RCC) will be collectively responsible for facilitating and coordinating the work of the entire RCEM.

The responsibilities of the RCC collectively and the focal points individually are:

1. Information: Sharing information on the post-Rio+20, Post-2015 and related processes and the AP-RCEM to CSOs in the region and feeding back information from constituencies to the AP-RCEM as a whole.

2. Outreach: Inviting CSOs from the various constituencies to engage the post- Rio+20, Post-2015 and related processes through the AP-RCEM.

3. Policy development: Facilitating process of coming up with common regional, sub-regional and/or constituency positions and recommendations through thematic working groups related to sustainable development/Post-2015 agenda whenever possible.

4. Engagement: Facilitating the participation of CSOs in regional, sub-regional and international processes in order to bring regional positions and perspectives related to sustainable development, while ensuring that such engagement is relevant to advocacy, education, organizing, mobilization and/or other related work of members at the national level.

5. Capacity-building: Facilitating and supporting CSO initiatives such as research, education, advocacy, campaigning and skills-sharing for more effective engagement on sustainable development processes/Post-2015.

6. Test and enrich structures and processes for the AP-RCEM: facilitating the collection and systematization of recommendations from the participants on how to improve the functioning of the AP-RCEM.

7. Resource mobilization: Raising funds for all of the above and ensuring transparency and accountability to our constituencies.


In addition, external citizen-led accountability mechanisms provide an opportunity for citizen-inclusive accountability across formal frameworks at regional and national levels. The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report noted that, “A variety of coalitions, non-governmental organizations and think tanks also work at the global and regional levels to collect data and information on trends and policies. Some multi-stakeholder partnerships likewise conduct stock-
taking, collect lessons learned and provide feedback, all of which can be useful to the high-level political forum.” 59

As noted above, the primary responsibility of SDG implementation, monitoring and review is at the national level. The SDGs lay out many guidelines and best practices which encourage states to have citizen participation and multi-stakeholder platforms for monitoring and review, on a voluntary basis.

The Agenda 2030 agreement “encourages” all member states to develop “ambitious national responses” to the overall implementation of the Agenda, building on existing planning instruments, such as national development and sustainable development strategies, as appropriate. 60 Agenda 2030 also encourages member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels against these country plans, which are country-led and country-driven. It states that such reviews should be inclusive by drawing on contributions from “indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, in line with national circumstances, policies and priorities. National parliaments as well as other institutions can also support these processes.” 61

Reaffirming the importance of “inclusiveness and participation through the appropriate mechanisms” as part of the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report noted that it is critical to “engage major groups and other stakeholders throughout the review process, including at the national and sub-national levels,” and that it would therefore be “beneficial to the review that Governments ensure inclusiveness and participation through the appropriate mechanisms. Progress in doing so could also be highlighted in national reviews at the High-Level Political Forum through engaging major groups and other stakeholders.” 62 The report includes common reporting guidelines by the UNSG for such voluntary reporting which notes that each review “could outline efforts made toward all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the Goals and targets, including national and local government, legislative bodies, the public, civil society and the private sector.” 63

Agenda 2030 does not stipulate a frequency for the national and sub-national reviews. However, the UNSG has noted that more frequent reviews, grounded in a national context, will support

59 United Nations Secretary General, ‘Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level’, January 2016, para 63.
62 United Nations Secretary General, ‘Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level’, January 2016, paras 64 and 65.
63 Annex of United Nations Secretary General, ‘Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level’, January 2016, para 5.
stronger national engagement. Such regular national reviews are expected to serve as a basis for the voluntary national reviews by the HLPF. The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report encourages each country to consider holding up to two voluntary national reviews at the HLPF between now and 2030. Those reviews will be timed by countries so that they are most useful to their own national policymaking process.

The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report asserts that the success of the review system will ultimately be determined by its ability to help translate the Agenda into a nationally owned vision and objectives and transformative action, which “can only happen if reviews building on existing structures draw on contributions from all stakeholder groups.” Further, it notes that country-level reviews and preparations can reveal challenges at the domestic level and enhance cooperation across ministries and institutions.

The Ministerial Declaration of the 2016 HLPF session “requests the President of the Economic and Social Council to encourage voluntary national reviews by all countries, including countries in special situations.” The 2016 HLPF session itself showcased 22 voluntary national reviews on the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: from Mexico, Morocco, Switzerland, Montenegro, Sierra Leone, Norway, Madagascar, Georgia, Turkey, Finland, Samoa, Uganda, Germany, Togo, Estonia, the Philippines, Colombia, Egypt, France, China, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela and the Republic of Korea. The extent of consultation and coordination for these voluntary national reviews appears broad-ranging with some facilitating inter-ministerial coordination to others ensuring the wider inclusion of civil society and public consultations.

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64 United Nations, 'Transforming our world: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development', para 75.
65 United Nations Secretary General, 'Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level', January 2016, para 80.
66 Ibid, para 75.
67 Ibid, para 78.
70 Ibid, p 5.
THE GLOBAL STRATEGY FOR WOMEN’S, CHILDREN’S AND ADOLESCENT’S HEALTH (2016-2030) AND KEY INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS FOR ACCOUNTABILITY

The Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health (2016-2030) came into effect alongside the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and aims to advance the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development by “guiding transformative change that enables every woman, child and adolescent – in every setting – to realize their full potential and their human right to the highest-attainable standard of health.” 71

The Global Strategy replaces the original Global Strategy launched in 2010 to accelerate progress on MDGs 4 and 5 for child and maternal health, and is the core global commitments document which civil society, national governments and the private sector are organizing themselves around to deliver on health commitments for women, children and adolescents.

THE GLOBAL STRATEGY IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The Indicator and Monitoring Framework for the Global Strategy includes a set of global indicators and a measurement agenda for assessing progress toward the Survive (end preventable deaths), Thrive (ensure health and well-being) and Transform (expand enabling environments) objectives of the strategy. Following a technical review and consultation process, a total of 60 indicators were selected for the Indicator and Monitoring framework, with a core set of 16. The framework aims to minimize the burden of country-to-global reporting by aligning with the SDGs with 34 of the 60 indicators.72

Progress against at least some of the indicators will be captured in an annual Global Strategy progress report. The H6 have noted that, “countries will need strong health information systems that use multiple data sources to generate the relevant statistics for decision-making and tracking of progress towards national, Global Strategy and SDG targets.” 73 Yet, as noted in their 2016 Monitoring Readiness Report, there are significant gaps in monitoring against the 60 indicators. Accordingly, “only a handful of the 60 core Global Strategy indicators are measured routinely, at scale and with high quality, adequate frequency and full disaggregation in all countries. Some indicators have been used for quite some time and have established monitoring systems in many countries that can be strengthened. Others are new and hard to measure and require further

72 The remaining 26 indicators were drawn from established global initiatives for RMNCAH and considered the Global Reference List of 100 Core Health Indicators. See H6 Partnership, ‘Monitoring Priorities for the Global Strategy,’ p 14.
73 Ibid, p 5.
investment and development before much country-level data are available." 74 Current reporting levels therefore varies across indicators, data availability, the analytical capacity of countries and the process used to derive estimates.75

Despite the issues pertaining to gaps in data, the dynamic in which indicators have been agreed has shifted to where data should be collected, even if not yet the case. This provides a significant opportunity for advocacy efforts toward an additional indicator, alongside the 60 already agreed, which would measure the level of citizen inclusion within formal accountability structures. This is important given recent advocacy for the inclusion of an indicator which measures the extent to which citizens can participate in accountability structures across the three stages of accountability, including civil society organizations working around respectful maternity care. The importance of an indicator on this issue has been recognised as an area for further development by the WHO-convened Ending Preventable Maternal Mortality (EPMM) metrics working group who have recommended an indicator on 'Presence of a national policy/strategy to ensure engagement of civil society organization representatives in periodic review of national programs for maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (MNCAH)' 76 The process for its refinement and inclusion in the Global Strategy indicator framework is to be further determined. For the meantime, the closest indicator to relating to citizen voice within the Strategy monitoring framework is the use of "Worldwide Governance Indicators" which measure voice, accountability, political stability and absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law, control of corruption.

In addition to developing a new global indicator on citizen-inclusion for the Global Strategy monitoring process, it is also key to ensure measurement against all the indicators uses data generated by citizens or based on their experiences. The Global Monitoring Readiness report sets out the "potential" data sources by which to measure the 24 Survive, 18 Thrive and 18 Transform indicators agreed to date. It notes that while CRVS, surveys and facility data are the three main sources of data, other sources of data including from individuals and communities could be used within the monitoring process, as follows:

74 Ibid, p 5.
76 The EPMM have called for an indicator for additional development on "Presence of a national strategy and action plan with budget allocations on sexual and reproductive health which is periodically reviewed and monitored through participatory processes and disaggregated by prohibited ground of discrimination (per ESCR General Comment No. 22 (2016) on the right to sexual and reproductive health' and to expand the core indicator listed above to 'Presence of a national policy/strategy to ensure engagement of civil society organization representatives in national level planning of sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health programs' and 'Presence of a national policy/strategy to ensure engagement of civil society organization representatives in periodic review of national programs for sexual, reproductive, maternal, newborn, child, and adolescent health (SRMNCAH).’

GLOBAL LEVEL ACCOUNTABILITY INSTITUTIONS TO THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

There are many institutions at the global level that participate in the monitoring, review, oversight and accountability for the Global Strategy. These include the World Health Assembly, Human Rights and Health Mechanisms, and the Independent Accountability Panel, a UN body created specifically to enhance accountability for the Strategy.

There have also been global efforts to bring together additional financial resources to support poor countries in their efforts to implement the Global Strategy and achieve its targets. This funding is being brought together under the auspices of the Global Financing Facility (GFF), housed at the World Bank. This sub-section will review each of these institutions as opportunities for citizen-led accountability for the Global Strategy.

WORLD HEALTH ASSEMBLY

The World Health Assembly (WHA) is the decision-making body of WHO. The WHA meets every May in Geneva. It is attended by delegations made up of government officials, and in some cases, NGOs from all 194 WHO Member States, focusing on a specific health agenda prepared by the Executive Board. The main functions of the World Health Assembly are to determine the policies of the Organization, appoint the Director-General, supervise financial policies and review and approve the proposed programme budget.

The Global Strategy Progress Report will be published every April, providing key information on progress for the WHA and the July HLPF session. NGOs with official observer status can apply to host official side events. In 2015, IPPF, Save the Children, World Vision and White Ribbon Alliance held the world’s first Global Citizens Dialogue on

“I commend citizens for being brave and hungry to raise voices of voiceless!” – Mr. Lucien Kouassi Kouakou, IPPF Africa’s Regional Director at the Global Citizen Dialogue at the World Health Assembly in 2015.
Accountability for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health as a formal side event at the 68th World Health Assembly in Geneva. The dialogue provided a global platform for citizens to share the lessons and recommendations of the Citizens’ Hearings held at national and local levels with health ministers and government delegates and called for these lessons to be integrated into the SDGs and Global Strategy frameworks.\(^7^7\) The application for a formal follow-up Global Dialogue in 2016 was rejected by WHO, so was subsequently held outside the WHO building and formal side event schedule.\(^7^8\) This highlights the lack of guaranteed spaces for citizen-led accountability at the WHA.

**HUMAN RIGHTS AND HEALTH WORKING GROUP**

In 2016, a new High-Level Health and Human Rights Working Group, supported by the World Health Organization and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, was established to advance the inter-linkages between the health and human rights agenda, with a one year mandate.\(^7^9\)

While human rights indicators have been used to monitor some specific issues related to health, and health indicators have been used to draw attention to some human rights issues, there are not yet shared indicators and monitoring systems to systematically link human rights and health monitoring. As such, the High-Level Working Group on Health and Human Rights, convened by WHO and OHCHR, “will provide guidance on how human rights can be integrated in health policies and programming,” will support operationalization of recommendations made by UN treaty monitoring bodies, and will support human rights mainstreaming at different levels through the work of UN agencies, governments and partners.\(^8^0\) This presents an opportunity to highlight citizens’ right to participate in health accountability policy processes.

In terms of monitoring, it will enhance accountability for rights by “the re-purposing of health indicators and data sources in collaboration with other UN agencies and partners (e.g. through treaty-monitoring bodies, national human rights institutions, the IAP, professional associations).”\(^8^1\)

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\(^7^7\) For further information see the Citizens’ Post Website at: [http://us11.campaign-archive1.com/?u=982f3effe9e0d29a6f0661efd&id=9dc405317a&e=[UNIQID]](http://us11.campaignarchive1.com/?u=982f3effe9e0d29a6f0661efd&id=9dc405317a&e=[UNIQID])

\(^7^8\) See further information see the Citizens’ Post Website [http://globaldaily.com/from-historic-breakthrough-to-colossal-breakdown/](http://globaldaily.com/from-historic-breakthrough-to-colossal-breakdown/)

\(^7^9\) H6 Partnership, ‘Monitoring Priorities for the Global Strategy’ p 14, p 21.

\(^8^0\) Ibid, p 45.

\(^8^1\) Ibid, p 45.
INDEPENDENT ACCOUNTABILITY PANEL

The Independent Accountability Panel (IAP), launched in January 2016, is the new structure formally mandated to produce an independent annual report to the UN Secretary-General on the State of Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health. The IAP succeeds the independent Expert Review Group (iERG), which reported to the United Nations Secretary-General on the results and resources related to the Global Strategy and progress on recommendations put forward by the Commission on Information and Accountability (CoIA).82

The IAP does not have a direct monitoring function, but rather serves to review and comment on the results of monitoring by others. Therefore, rather than report all the latest data, the IAP aims “to provide a snapshot of progress in the Global Strategy and help harmonize reporting.”83 Accordingly:

“...the IAP will use its reports to more broadly encourage ‘spaces’ and opportunities for answerability to rights-holders, through promoting social accountability and effective oversight institutions at national, regional and international levels. It seeks to reinforce the legitimacy and capacity of national and international institutions and oversight bodies, not to substitute them. Drawing on the sustainable development agenda and international human rights law, and the Global Strategy, the IAP sees its mandate in a truly universal accountability framework as an opportunity to: clarify responsibilities of various actors; promote incentives for duty-bearers to answer the demands and concerns of rights-holders, civil society organizations and other actors; and catalyse action to remove systemic deprivations of health-related rights for women, adolescents and children, at national and international levels. We call for all stakeholders to provide advice and inputs to our process, and to help us communicate our findings and advocate for remedial action to ensure healthy living for women, adolescents and children everywhere.”84

IAP’s first report aimed to highlight action areas to promote greater accountability and better health outcomes.85 In the report, the IAP selected indicators to illustrate progress for the three population groups of women, children and adolescents, to capture progress in relation to inequality and the “leave no one behind agenda” particularly in relation to

82 For further information on the CoIA and its recommendations please see http://www.who.int/woman_child_accountability/about/coia/en/index5.html
84 Ibid, pp 11-12.
85 Ibid, p 7.
adolescents, and stress the importance of accountability in humanitarian settings as well as financing the RMNCAH agenda. 86

The IAP has adopted a human rights accountability framework and will advocate for the use of its accountability framework by states and other international actors charged with advancing the sustainable development agenda. 87 The IAP framework builds on the framework previously used by CoIA and iERG, but additionally “draws on international human rights law, which lies at the core of the Global Strategy and is set out in instruments accepted by states through intergovernmental processes,” recognizing existing legal accountability mechanisms at the national level (e.g. courts and national human rights institution and others already listed in the revised Global Strategy, such as parliamentarians, civil society organizations, development partners and private sector actors) and international level (e.g. UN treaty monitoring bodies, regional bodies and the UN Human Rights Council’s Universal Periodic Review). 88 The IAP’s human-rights based approach includes a clear call for citizen engagement in accountability. The IAP stresses that a fundamental part of human rights accountability is “converting passive beneficiaries into active agents; that is, people who participate meaningfully in decisions that affect their well-being. Engagement by civil society is necessary for effective action by governments and international organizations, and for holding them to account.” 89 As such the IAP’s accountability framework recognizes parliamentary inquiries and social accountability mechanisms such as citizens’ hearings, all play a role in independent reviews. Moving forward the IAP will analyse the circumstances in which diverse forms of review can be practised most effectively.

In the 2016 IAP report, the panel recognised that in the past decade, a significant number of initiatives grouped under the term social accountability have emerged in some countries. Undertaken by civil society organizations, sometimes supported by international agencies, social accountability has focused on citizen participation in governing accountability mechanisms and in establishing citizen-led forums for accountability: “These initiatives have produced new data, including by advocating for greater transparency, especially on national and subnational budget information, and by collecting direct observations from community members. The IAP recommends greater support for an expansion of these efforts by national governments, international donors and the private sector.” 90

86 Ibid, p 18.
87 Ibid, p 10.
88 Ibid.
90 Ibid, p 16.
THE 2016 IAP REPORT INCLUDED THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS RELATING TO CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY SPECIFICALLY:

- In recognition of the importance of an enabling environment for citizen-inclusive accountability, the IAP notes that civil society activities, such as citizen hearings, should be supported and enabled through freedom of information and association protections. The IAP recommends access to data and other information for review by civil society, urging that the "...dissemination and communication of data should aim at closing the gaps in access and use of data, providing the highest quality information for all, most easily understood format, and making it available at the time when decisions are being made or the opportunity for influencing outcomes is there." For social accountability to lead to sustained and meaningful action, there needs to be freedom of information and mechanisms that enable people to access information about service delivery and outcomes, and budgets. Information and transparency are key prerequisites to social accountability as the IAP argue that citizens are entitled to know the commitments, resources and results of all stakeholders, at national, regional and international levels.  

- The IAP recommends that donors should earmark resources for civil society and national accountability mechanisms. While donors have long recognized the merits of recommendations emerging from the monitoring, "Instead of spending resources on multiple evaluations of their own projects, they should reserve a significant proportion of their international aid to support the development of national capacities and a stronger civil society." 

- The IAP affirms that new, inclusive and participatory national mechanisms are essential, but they must complement existing ones – parliaments, branches of government, the judiciary and human rights institutions – to provide remedies for the inequalities and inequities that prevent disadvantaged groups from enjoying the health benefits that are their right. 

- The IAP notes that strengthening the capacities of independent national bodies producing and analysing data, and of civil society engendering the political will so that data is used to promote the right to health will lead to more efficient approaches

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93 Ibid, p 42.
94 Ibid, p 16.
95 Ibid, p 3.
and equitable policy options. The IAP acknowledge that much progress has been achieved in monitoring some indicators and identifying how existing gaps might be addressed but vast gaps remain. Looking at the future of monitoring, the IAP argue that one of the most important gaps for concerted action is the need for governance mechanisms where all users and potential users of data, including parliamentarians and young people, have a voice. “New technologies, particularly mobile phones, enable not only access to social services and broadening financial systems, but also provide an important mechanism for crowdsourcing and social accountability” as it is through these technologies, that citizens are documenting conditions and making demands on health systems, serving the cause of accountability in communities around the world. They argue, “A strong civil society can ensure the data are used to hold all stakeholders, including donors and civil society organizations, to account.”

- The IAP recommends that at national and global level, citizen-led accountability mechanisms, such as citizen hearings and other symbolic tribunals, should be promoted, and findings should be integrated into the monitoring of progress towards commitments. The IAP recommend strengthening the management and leadership of civil society organizations as well as their technical and advocacy skills to support meaningful social accountability.

- The IAP calls for greater aid transparency and applauds “initiatives to make information on donor commitments and disbursements freely available. It further encourages all donors to provide such information, in accessible formats that ideally permit disaggregation of funding by priorities, including allocations to RMNCAH.”

- At the domestic level, the IAP also calls for better collection and transparency of information regarding tax collection and the allocation of public tax revenues.

GLOBAL FINANCING FACILITY

The GFF is a multi-stakeholder partnership in support of the Global Strategy and health-related SDGs. Launched in July 2015, it started operating with US$12 billion in domestic and international, private and public funding.

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96 Ibid, p 16.
97 Ibid, p 16.
98 Ibid, p 42
99 Ibid, p 56.
The GFF is an important addition to the accountability institutions for the Global Strategy and health related SDGs. Countries which receive funding through the GFF have an additional layer of accountability as they must report to the World Bank, and follow World Bank processes in creating investment cases and in getting new projects designed, appraised, approved, funded and assessed.

In the GFF’s development phase in 2014, funding was aligned to country-led, five-year investment plans for the health of women, children and adolescents in four initial countries for four so-called “front runner” countries (Democratic Republic of the Congo, Ethiopia, Kenya and Tanzania). At the launch of the GFF in 2015, an additional eight “front runner” countries were identified as the next group to benefit from its funding: Bangladesh, Cameroon, India, Liberia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Senegal and Uganda, rather than extending to all countries. 100

THE GFF HAS FIVE OBJECTIVES:

1. Finance national plans to scale-up RMNCAH and measure results.
2. Support countries’ transition toward sustainable domestic financing of RMNCAH.
3. Finance the strengthening of civil registration and vital statistics systems.
4. Finance the development and deployment of global public goods that support strong health systems.
5. Contribute to a better-coordinated and streamlined RMNCAH financing architecture.

The GFF Secretariat is hosted at the World Bank and supports GFF implementation in countries. It manages the GFF Trust Fund, and supports the governance of the GFF including the Investors Group and the GFF Trust Fund Committee. The GFF Secretariat is also responsible for resource mobilization and encouraging donor investment in the GFF.

The Investor Group includes the governments of Canada, Norway, the United States, Japan and the United Kingdom, Ethiopia, Kenya, Liberia, Senegal, alongside the Office of the UN Secretary General, UNFPA, UNICEF, the World Bank, Gavi, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), two private sector representatives and two civil society members of PMNCH’s CSO Constituency. 101

The Trust Fund Committee includes the donors of the GFF and the Chair or Vice-Chair of the Investors Group. It determines the funding approach and priorities for the GFF Trust

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Fund, including the financing arrangements between the Trust Fund allocation, World Bank funding, and domestic financing. The Trust Fund Committee also agrees on the annual work plan and budget for the GFF Secretariat and oversees the performance of the Trust Fund.

The **GFF Country Platform** is a government-led, multi-stakeholder platform responsible for GFF operations in each country. Country Platforms play an important role in planning for and implementing the GFF in country, including:

- Developing an Investment Case
- Developing a health financing strategy
- Mobilizing resources for different areas of the Investment Case
- Coordinating technical assistance provided to assist in developing the Investment Cases and health financing strategy
- Coordinating monitoring and evaluation and quality assurance

The **GFF Business Plan**, which describes how the GFF will operate, lists several important stakeholders that should be partners in the GFF process, including civil society. Governments typically use existing structures for RMNCAH planning as the GFF Country Platform.

The **Health Financing Strategy** includes a costed implementation plan that “sets out shorter-term steps for achieving the strategy’s milestones and investments” and is usually developed alongside the Investment Case. Domestic government resources and anticipated donor funds will be included, thus providing useful information for future accountability.

The **Results Framework** is the set of targets and indicators used by the government, partners and the GFF Investors Group to measure progress toward RMNCAH results they

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102 Ibid.
104 Draft guidance note on CSO engagement in the GFF.
are trying to achieve through the investment case. The indicators and targets in a results framework are taken from the priority areas in a country’s investment case. The World Bank is also developing a set of indicators that must be included in each country’s Results Framework.105

The indicators will include financing indicators, a set of core, impact level Global Strategy indicators and will be drawn from additional internationally recognized indicator frameworks.106 Ultimately, the success of the GFF in each country will be measured by how well it helps a country reach the targets identified in their results framework.

The IAP has argued that the World Bank should “enhance partnerships to accelerate its implementation in more countries, and to ensure civil society has a genuine voice in the ways funding is used and in auditing those funds,” 107 specifically calling for indicators for country platforms to include greater civil society participation. The IAP will closely monitor how successful the GFF is in mobilizing domestic financing and whether it is accelerating universal health care.” 108 They have further argued that the involvement of civil society in the development of Investment Cases in the four front runner countries varied from one country to the next but common challenges persisted, including poor communication about GFF processes and limited representation of civil society members in consultations.

IAP has stated they are “keenly interested in how both the processes and results in the GFF are monitored to ensure adherence to transparency and accountability,” 109 and emphasised that experience from other funding mechanisms, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, has shown that civil society involvement is crucial to fostering national accountability.

105 Ibid.
106 Ibid.
108 Ibid. p 56.
109 Ibid. p 56.
MINIMUM STANDARDS FOR COUNTRY PLATFORMS

The GFF Business Plan included a set of minimum standards for country platforms, which outlined basic parameters for enhancing transparency and inclusivity. The IAP has highlighted that in response to concerns about the engagement of civil society and other stakeholders, a revised, more comprehensive set of minimum standards was developed by civil society leaders and submitted to the Investors’ Group in February 2016, including:

To promote inclusiveness and participation, Country Platforms should:
- Reserve at least two seats for civil society organisation (CSO) representatives, plus CSO observers.
- Representatives should be selected in a participatory and transparent manner.
- Give priority to CSOs representing coalitions.
- CSO representatives should be fully and actively involved at all stages in the GFF process.
- Develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan for engaging CSOs outside the country platform.
- CSO representatives on country platforms must consult with CSOs for broader input. The Platform should provide funding for these consultations.

To ensure transparency, Country Platforms should:
- Release detailed documents about the Country Platform procedures, membership, rules, etc.
- Be published on Ministry of Health and GFF websites, and disseminated to a listserv with voluntary registration.
- Circulate draft documents for inputs with clear timelines on when feedback is needed.
- Circulate meeting minutes, specifying timelines and responsible parties for any action items.
- Announce consultation meetings at least two weeks in advance, including all documents and a list of participants with email addresses so that representatives can be reached ahead of time.
- Make meetings available through live webcast.

To promote independence and accountability, the Country Platforms should:
- Align accountability and monitoring processes and build on other national processes, such as annual health sector reviews.
- Include a working group to develop an accountability strategy for the implementation of the Investment Case. Strategy implementation should be funded independently from the GFF.
- Establish mechanisms for hearing and remedying grievances related to the GFF process and implementation. A review should be conducted at least every two years, and inform an update of Country Platform procedures, to ensure adherence to Country Platform principles.
- The GFF Investors Group should establish an ombudsman, grievance mechanism and redress policy as a backup to the country mechanisms.

HARMONISING ACCOUNTABILITY FOR THE GLOBAL STRATEGY AT GLOBAL, REGIONAL, AND NATIONAL LEVELS

An Operational Framework to the Global Strategy was launched in May 2016 to serve as a resource for national governments and the wide diversity of stakeholders including civil society, the private sector and development partners. It offers guidance and options for consideration as countries translate the Strategy into national and sub-national strategies and plans, starting with the period 2016-2020.\textsuperscript{110}

To support alignment between the SDGs and Global Strategy with regional and national levels, as well as across the various global accountability institutions listed above, both frameworks are guided by a Unified Accountability Framework. These are discussed in further detail below.

OPERATIONAL FRAMEWORK TO THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

The Operational Framework highlights that Country leadership is key among the Strategy’s nine action areas, given that it is the overarching means by with to drive all implementation. Financing, community engagement and accountability are cross-cutting functions which are determined by, and contribute to, country leadership.\textsuperscript{111} The framework calls on country platforms developing national health plans to be transparent and inclusive of groups normally excluded from decision-making (including youth and adolescents), integrate with and build upon existing mechanisms for planning and coordination, including other planning processes relevant to the SDGs and be used for monitoring and reviewing progress.\textsuperscript{112}

In translating SDG targets into national strategies, the framework calls for country leadership to set or reaffirm national targets to be reached by 2030 for the SDGs related to the Strategy, allowing for joint monitoring of national health and RMNCAH strategies across different sectors. It notes countries may find it useful to set additional targets, either on the key interventions and strategies in health and other sectors required, or transitional milestones (e.g. for 2020 and 2025) to guide progress toward the 2030 deadlines.\textsuperscript{113}

To build an effective accountability process which Global Strategy and link with the SDG follow-up and review processes, the Operational Framework outlines that country

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{111} Ibid p 14.
  \item \textsuperscript{112} Ibid, pp 16-17.
  \item \textsuperscript{113} Ibid, pp 18-19.
\end{itemize}
platforms “can play an important role in undertaking reviews, publishing their outcomes and acting on their results.”

It specifies key steps in the accountability process as:

1. Determine when and how often to conduct reviews.

2. Ensure broad stakeholder engagement in the process.

3. Identify key data, evidence, source documents, and processes to review.

4. Relate findings from reviews to SDG-related commitments for health, human rights, gender and equity, including the incorporation of sectoral reviews into the National Voluntary Reviews of the High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.

5. Take remedial actions as necessary.

The Operational framework stresses that leveraging partnerships with civil society, adolescent and youth groups can enhance the commitment of national governments across sectors. It also specifies that mechanisms to strengthen accountability include various citizen-led and human rights based mechanisms.

These include:

- Parliamentary committees
- Citizens/public hearings and inquiries

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114 Ibid, p 34.
115 Ibid, p 34.
• Use of national human rights and judicial institutions and their processes

• Action by professional associations, such as health workers

• Standardisation of user-friendly scorecards, updated frequently with locally available disaggregated data

• Providing insights into progress at national and sub-national levels

• Citizen-led, social accountability platforms such as U Report

• Social audits and citizen report cards

• Briefings or town hall meetings on tracking of results.117

UNIFIED ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK

To implement and align the various monitoring and accountability elements of the Global Strategy and the RMNCAH-related targets of the SDGs, the Unified Accountability Framework (UAF) is intended to promote and align multi-stakeholder engagement to support countries to fulfil their responsibilities for accountability, including by strengthening country health information systems and national monitoring platforms. Accountability is one of the three pillars of the Every Woman, Every Child architecture to support country-led implementation of the Global Strategy toward achieving the SDGs. This work is coordinated through the UAF and supported by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn & Child Health (PMNCH). The other two pillars are technical support provided by the six organizations responsible for promoting and implementing the global health agenda across the UN system (H6) - UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UN Women, WHO, and the World Bank Group, and Financing with the Global Financing Facility and others. The UAF is intended to help ensure that global and regional processes are synchronized with country planning and review cycles, and have a streamlining effect that minimizes the reporting burden on countries.118

The UAF aims to help harmonize partner efforts in support of country-led accountability processes, by linking with existing regional and global accountability work across the different PMNC constituencies and the Partnership.119 The UAF also proposes to harmonise

117 Ibid, p 34.
with SDG review and regional review processes such as with the African Union Peer Review Mechanism.120

While some mechanisms have been proposed for the potential to unify partner action across the monitor, review and act spectrum, they must be agreed to and used by all key stakeholders to support country-led efforts in a harmonized way. As of September 2016, “Options will be reviewed in a process led by EWEC and PMNCH and the logistics and functioning of the Unified Accountability Framework further defined.” 121 Specifically:

- **MONITOR**: The UAF will help countries and their partners align efforts to strengthen country civil registration and vital statistics (CRVS) and health information systems.

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120 H6 Partnership, ‘Monitoring Priorities for the Global Strategy’, p 43.
A guiding principle is to implement the Global Strategy monitoring in line with country-led plans and evidence-based priorities.

- For example, working with the Health Data Collaborative (HDC), a proposed unifying mechanism to align partner support for national plans and streamline efforts to strengthen country CRVS and health information systems.

- **REVIEW:** The proposed unifying review mechanism for the Global Strategy is the collaboratively developed Global Strategy Progress Report to be launched every April in advance of the World Health Assembly in May and the July United Nations High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development (HLPF).

  - As certain data are only collected every three to five years, it may not report annually on progress against the Global Strategy targets or outcome indicators but will provide thematic updates on emerging issues in the interim, including linkages to the annual themes and priorities of the HLPF and the World Health Assembly.

  - Scorecards, such as those developed by African Leader’s Malaria Alliance (ALMA), are explicitly mentioned as “a powerful tool for reviewing Global Strategy progress within countries by communicating key findings to multiple stakeholders using simple graphics and dashboards,” although it is unclear whether these would be integrated into the Global Strategy progress report.

  - The UAF proposals note that Human Rights review mechanisms – including the Universal Periodic Review, Human Rights Council and Treaty Body Mechanisms – could supplement the data on women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health as part of the UAF review function.122

  - Review is also an essential task for the UAF at the global level, which entails both monitoring the Global Strategy indicators and supporting a critical independent review function. For independent review, the newly appointed Independent Accountability Panel (IAP), following the independent Expert Review Group (iERG) will scrutinize the monitoring data on the

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122 Ibid, p 43.
implementation of the Global Strategy and make recommendations on remedial action required.\textsuperscript{123}

- **ACT:** The UAF is provided political leadership through the EWEC Global Architecture and its High-level Steering Group (HLSG). Within the EWEC Global Architecture, the H6 agencies – UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, UN Women and the World Bank – will provide technical support for country-led plans, systems strengthening and implementation, while also strengthening commitments and ensuring remedial action for women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health.

  - The Global Financing Facility (GFF) will facilitate financing from multiple sources for country investments in RMNCAH, coordinated by the World Bank and multi-stakeholder partners in the GFF Investors Group.

  - Another unifying mechanism for action is the High-Level Working Group on Health and Human Rights, which provides guidance on how human rights can be integrated in health policies and programming.

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At the regional level, it will also be critical to ensure relevant alignment with regional initiatives. In follow-up to the African Union’s Maputo Plan of Action 2007-2015, the African Union approved the revised Maputo Plan of Action 2016-2030 on sexual and reproductive health.

This revised Maputo Plan of Action 2016-2030 for the operationalization of the Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights Continental Policy Framework follows the review of the Maputo Plan of Action 2007-2015 and seeks to take the continent forward toward the goal of universal access to comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services in Africa beyond 2015. The ultimate goal of the Plan of Action is for “African Governments, civil society, the private sector and all multisector development partners to join forces and redouble efforts so that together, the effective implementation of the continental policy framework on SRHR is achieved in order to end preventable maternal, newborn, child and adolescent deaths, expand contraceptive use, reduce levels of unsafe abortion, end child marriage, eradicate harmful traditional practices including female genital mutilation and prevent gender-based violence and ensure access of adolescents and youth to SRH by 2030 in all countries in Africa.” It is built on nine action areas: political commitment, leadership and governance; health legislation; health financing/investments; health services strengthening/human resource development; partnerships and collaborations; information and education; accountability/monitoring and evaluation; investment in the vulnerable and marginalized populations and improved adolescent and youth SRHR.

In addition to the Sexual and Reproductive Health Continental Policy Framework, the plan will contribute to the attainment of the SRHR targets set out in the SDGs and the global strategy on Women’s, Children’s and Adolescent’s Health.

As part of the review process, feedback from civil society was accepted and comments and recommendations were included in the revised document.

The revised plan provides a core set of actions which “encourages all countries to review their plans against this action plan to identify gaps and areas for improvement. At the same time, the Plan, although focused on country action, blends in niche roles in the nine action areas for the African Union, Regional Economic Communities and continental and international partners. It also recognizes the role of civil society and the private sector within the framework of national programs. The Plan sets indicators for monitoring progress at these different levels.”

There will be an annual review process attached to the revised Maputo Plan of Action. Governments need to set up systems to monitor these at the national level which provides an opportunity to engage on the national level as well as at the AU level. Namibia, South Africa and Kenya are generally supportive governments which could be engaged as champions.

ASSESSING OPENINGS FOR CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Building on the overview of the formal provisions and the recommendations of relevant agreements and recommendations from key institutions as they relate to furthering citizen-inclusive accountability for the SDGs and Global Strategy in the previous section, this unit will assess progress toward citizen-led accountability to date and set out opportunities moving forward.

Taking each framework in turn, it will examine the extent to which these agreements and associated institutions explicitly:

- **Build an enabling environment for citizen-inclusive accountability**, including considerations relating to progress reporting, transparency and financial support.

- **Open formal accountability channels to citizen input across the monitor, review, act and remedy stages of the accountability cycle.** This includes
channels for citizen-led data and citizen inclusion within formal mechanisms.

- **Measure performance (of themselves or others) on furthering citizen-inclusion and participatory nature of accountability** such as through indicators or assessments.

**ASSESSING CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY IN RELATION TO THE SDGS**

Reviewing the text of Agenda 2030, UN agreement on provisional SDG indicators, the 2016 UN SDG Progress Report, HLPF’s formal mandate, and the UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review Report against the three key assessment areas identified in this paper, the following provisions, recommendations and opportunities can be recognised at global, regional and national levels.

**PROVISIONS FOR AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Progress Reporting:**

As a formal policy, progress against SDG indicators will be captured in annual SDG Progress Report prepared by UNSG in collaboration with UN system and a Global Sustainable Development Report. While this will be used as a tool to review progress at the global level, creating a framework to compare countries around the world, indicators will also be developed by Member States at regional and national levels. This Member State-led process represents an important opportunity to call for additional indicators to measure government performance on RNMNCAH as prioritised by citizens.¹²⁴

The annual follow-up and review process at the HLPF will be informed by the annual *SDG Progress Reports*, thematic HLPF progress reviews on a rotating basis and an annual *Global Sustainable Development Report*, providing transparent data for citizen engagement in assessing progress across countries and access to all official information and documents via the Major Group process.¹²⁵

Transparency:

Regional reviews for the SDGs provide space for upward accountability to the HLPF and downward accountability to the national level. The UNSG’s Follow-up and Review Report suggested that Regional reviews can help to keep track of how the conclusions of the HLPF reviews are being followed up, thus providing a space for transparency around implementation of HLPF recommendations for citizens to review progress.

The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review report encourages each country to consider carrying out up to two voluntary national reviews at the HLPF between now and 2030 which would provide additional transparency on progress at national level. However, such national views are voluntary and may not take place.

CITIZEN-INCLUSION IN ACCOUNTABILITY CHANNELS

Citizen-led data:

In terms of citizen-led evidence, the UNSG has made a formal recommendation that new data sources and technologies for data collection be explored, including through partnerships with civil society. In addition, the 2016 Annual SDG Progress Report recognises that tracking progress against indicators will require collection, processing and analysis from new and innovative data sources, in addition to those from official statistical systems, marking a clear political opportunity to build momentum behind the need for citizen-led evidence.

Citizen inclusion:

Under Agenda 2030, governments commit to conducting regular reviews, guided by the principle that follow-up and review processes at national, regional and global level should be ‘inclusive, participatory and transparent for all people and will support the reporting by all relevant stakeholders’ including civil society and other stakeholders “in line with national circumstances.” This is a formal policy, although one which is up to governments to implement in practice.

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126 United Nations Secretary General, ‘Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level’, January 2016, para 81.
127 Ibid, para 80.
The Major Groups and other relevant stakeholders shall be allowed to attend all official meetings of the forum; to intervene in official meetings; to submit documents and present written and oral contributions; to make recommendations; and to organize side events and discussions in cooperation with Member States and the HLPF Secretariat. This opens potential space for citizen-inclusion via the recognised Major Groups and other stakeholder groups.

In addition, the UNSG has formally recommended that Major Groups and other Stakeholders can access HLPF documentation and provide comments and inputs through an online engagement platform to support and document the reviews of the high-level political forum. He has formally recommended that their input should be actively solicited through calls for evidence and invitations to be presented at the forum, for multi-stakeholder dialogues and for a more general report on the Major Group or other stakeholder's aggregated contribution in a specific focus area. Another formal recommendation was made within the 2016 HLPF Ministerial Declaration which calls for regular voluntary reviews to promote the inclusive participation of all relevant stakeholders, acknowledging the contribution from parliaments, civil society and other groups. The UNSG has recommended that it is critical to “engage major groups and other stakeholders throughout the review process, including at the national and subnational level” and that “Governments ensure inclusiveness and participation through the appropriate mechanisms.” The UNSG has recommended common reporting guidelines for such voluntary reporting which notes that civil society and other stakeholders should be involved in the national state-led review process.

As a formal policy, Agenda 2030 encourages member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels against country plans, which are country-led and country-driven. It states that such reviews should be inclusive by drawing on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, and other stakeholders.

Since regional reviews are intended to provide space for peer learning, this creates an opportunity to encourage governments to share learning on how they have created channels for citizen input within their own national SDG review processes.

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132 United Nations Secretary General, 'Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level', January 2016, para 108.
133 Ministerial declaration of the 2016 high-level political forum on sustainable development', 29 July 2016 (E/HLS/2016/1).
134 See annex of United Nations Secretary General, 'Critical milestones towards coherent, efficient and inclusive follow-up and review at the global level', January 2016.
MEASURING PERFORMANCE ON CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY

Indicator development and general assessment:

With national level indicators for the SDGs to be developed by Member Status there is an opportunity call for the development of indicators to measure performance on citizen-inclusivity itself. The UNSG’s 2016 Follow-up and Review report noted that as part of national and sub-national reviews, that governments should ensure inclusiveness and participation through the appropriate mechanisms, and that “progress in doing so could also be highlighted in national reviews at the high-level political forum.” Further, the UNSG’s guidance on voluntary national reporting to the HLPF proposes that each review “could outline efforts made toward all stakeholders to inform them on and involve them in the Goals and targets, including national and local government, legislative bodies, the public, civil society and the private sector.” 135

Further opportunities for the HLPF to review progress of governments on furthering citizen-inclusive accountability at the global level could be recommended through the Major Groups’ channels for input.

ASSESSING CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY IN RELATION TO THE GLOBAL STRATEGY

Reviewing the various global frameworks and processes along with the three key assessment areas identified in this paper, following are provisions, recommendations and opportunities for consideration at global, regional and national levels:

PROVIDING AN ENABLING ENVIRONMENT FOR CITIZEN-LED ACCOUNTABILITY

Progress Reporting:

As formal policy, the Monitoring and Indicator Framework for the Global Strategy will provide progress on outcomes relating to indicators in the framework. These will be captured in the annual Global Strategy Progress Report. The Global Strategy Progress Report will be published every April and provide key information on progress for the WHA itself, as well as the July HLPF session. However, as certain data will only be collected every three to five years, the annual report may not include progress against the targets or outcome

indicators for the Strategy every year; rather providing thematic updates and emerging issues in the interim. These themes intend to relate to the themes of the HLPF and WHA. 136 While the IAP does not have a direct monitoring function to the Strategy monitoring framework, the Annual IAP report will provide a snapshot of progress in the Strategy and help harmonize reporting, 137 thus contributing to global level reporting on the Strategy.

Transparency:

The IAP’s recommendations in its inaugural 2016 report place a large emphasis on the enabling environment for citizen-inclusive accountability, noting that civil society activities should be supported and enabled through freedom of information (access to data such as RMNCAH spending and other information in clear formats) and association protections. 138 The IAP have specifically highlighted the need for better transparency of information regarding tax collection and the allocation of public tax revenues from national governments and called for greater aid transparency from all donors, in accessible formats that ideally permit disaggregation of funding by priorities, including allocations to RMNCAH. As well as recognising the role of social accountability in driving transparency, the IAP has argued information and transparency are key prerequisites to social accountability as citizens are entitled to know the commitments, resources and results of all stakeholders, at a time when decisions are being made or there is an opportunity for influencing outcomes. 139

The GFF Business Plan includes a set of minimum standards for GFF Country Platforms which include enhancing transparency. Civil society have called for these to include the release of detailed documents about the Country Platform procedures, meeting minutes, prior notice for consultation meetings and the use of online spaces to make these more accessible. 140

Financing:

The IAP has also highlighted the need for more investment in social accountability initiatives by national governments, international donors and the private sector.141 Further, the GFF Investment Case process opens the potential for civil society to call for investment in social accountability initiatives from GFF trust fund bilateral donors, and the WB. Going further, there is a need for civil society to advocate for the GFF specifically to incorporate

139 Ibid, p 42.
the need for health rights education and social accountability platforms in their country guidelines to ensure these areas are prioritised within funding decisions.

**CITIZEN-INCLUSION IN ACCOUNTABILITY CHANNELS:**

**Citizen-led data:**

The Global Strategy Indicator and Monitoring Framework proposes that a range of data sources should be used at the country level, including from individuals and communities (i.e. citizen generated data). However, focus remains on it investing in strengthening CRVS systems. Additionally, the 2016 Global Monitoring Readiness report sets out “potential” data sources including from individuals and communities could be used within the monitoring process. There is therefore an opportunity to push for greater recognition of citizen-led evidence and data for inclusion within the formal monitoring system to the Global Strategy. The IAP has further lauded social accountability as contributing new data and by collecting direct observations from community members, including through crowd-sourcing.142

Finally, within the proposed Unified Accountability Framework to the global Strategy, scorecards such as those developed by African ALMA, are explicitly mentioned as a potential tool for reviewing Global Strategy progress.

**Citizen Inclusion:**

The IAP has adopted a human rights accountability framework and will advocate for its use by states and other international actors charged with advancing the sustainable development agenda.143 As the IAP’s accountability framework recognizes that parliamentary inquiries and social accountability mechanisms, such as citizens’ hearings, all play a role in independent reviews, this marks a clear opportunity for renewed political momentum around social accountability.144 The Operational Framework also affirms that citizen-led and other human rights based mechanisms work to strengthen accountability.145 Moving forward the IAP will analyse the circumstances in which diverse forms of review can be practised most effectively. This could also serve as a key driver in promoting effective social accountability and calling for the findings from such processes to be incorporated into existing formal mechanisms.

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143 Ibid, p 10.
144 Ibid, p 10.
The Operational Framework for the Global Strategy calls for platforms at country level developing national health plans to be inclusive of all groups and to build on existing mechanisms for planning and to review progress.\textsuperscript{146} The IAP has called for new, inclusive and participatory national accountability mechanisms which complement existing ones – parliaments, branches of government, the judiciary and human rights institutions.\textsuperscript{147} The IAP has recommended that at global and national levels, citizen-led accountability mechanisms, such as Citizens’ Hearings and other symbolic tribunals, should be promoted and their findings integrated into the monitoring of progress toward commitments.\textsuperscript{148}

As formal policy, the GFF business plan lists several important stakeholders that should be partners in the GFF process, including civil society, which should be part of each GFF Country Platform. This is important since the GFF Country Platform oversees the development of Investment Cases.\textsuperscript{149} Yet the IAP has noted that citizen inclusion in the development of such Investment Cases has varied from one country to the next. The IAP has therefore called on the World Bank to ensure the GFF enhances partnerships to

\textsuperscript{146} Ibid, pp 16-17.
\textsuperscript{147} IAP, ‘2016: Old Challenges, New Hopes,’ p 3.
\textsuperscript{148} Ibid, p 42.
\textsuperscript{149} Draft guidance note on CSO engagement in the GFF (unpublished).
accelerate its implementation in more countries and to ensure civil society has a genuine voice in the ways funding is used and in auditing those funds.\textsuperscript{150} Civil society groups have argued that Country Platforms should include at least two seats for CSO representatives and should develop a Stakeholder Engagement Plan. The IAP has pointed to the important role civil society has played on similar funding platforms. In addition, the IAP has urged that indicators for GFF Country Platforms include greater civil society participation.

In line with the proposals made by civil society to enhance accountability of the GFF, alignment of accountability and monitoring process with other national processes and mechanisms for hearing and remedying grievances, it will be important to ensure such measures have a strong emphasis on citizen inclusion.

At the global level, the WHA will provide a formal space to discuss progress against the Global Strategy. NGOs with official observer status are also able to apply to host official side events.

**MEASURING PERFORMANCE ON CITIZEN-INCLUSIVE ACCOUNTABILITY**

**Indicator development and general assessment:**

The High-Level Health and Human Rights Working Group has been mandated to provide guidance on how human rights can be integrated in health policies and programming,\textsuperscript{151} which could highlight citizens’ right to participate in accountability. Recent advocacy initiatives have called for an indicator which measures performance on citizen-inclusive accountability within the Global Strategy Monitoring and Indicator Framework. This presents a clear opportunity to support expert groups to refine a potential indicator. In the meantime, the closest indicator relating to voice within the Global Strategy is the use of “Worldwide Governance Indicators,” which measure voice, accountability, political stability, absence of violence, government effectiveness, regulatory quality, rule of law and control of corruption.

\textsuperscript{151} H6 Partnership, ‘Monitoring Priorities for the Global Strategy’ p14, p21.
The formal provisions and recommendations of key institutions relating to the SDGs and Global Strategy frameworks have laid the foundations for citizen-inclusive accountability on multiple fronts. Progress to date and the areas for future action as outlined in this paper are as follows:

- **Building an enabling environment for citizen-inclusive accountability:** Both frameworks include provisions and recommendations for progress reporting and set standards for transparency which are essential for citizens to track progress. The IAP to the Global Strategy has also emphasised the need for funding to support social accountability efforts.

- **Opening formal accountability channels to citizen input across the monitor, review, act and remedy stages of the accountability cycle:** Recommendations from key institutions for both frameworks point to new and innovative data sources, including from citizens, although these are not currently specified within formal provisions. Regarding the SDGs, formal provisions and recommendations have been made around citizen inclusion within formal country platforms which should serve as planning and review mechanisms. At the global level, provisions and recommendations also clearly relate to the Major Group and other stakeholder engagement in the HLPF.

Regarding the Global Strategy, guidance from the Operational Framework and the recommendations of the IAP have highlighted the importance of inclusive country platforms. Further advocacy will be needed to translate this momentum into action at country level, as well as ensure that citizens are adequately included in the global review process at WHA. Recommendations have also been made for citizen inclusion within GFF country platforms, which has been ad hoc to date. This is critical to ensure civil society has a genuine say in the ways funding is used and in auditing those funds.

- **Measuring performance on the inclusive and participatory nature of accountability:** The UNSG has recommended countries report on the extent to which citizens have been included within voluntary reviews. Further opportunities for the HLPF to review progress of governments on inclusive accountability at the global level could be recommended through the Major Groups’ channels for input. Recent advocacy initiatives have called for an indicator which measures performance on citizen-inclusive accountability within the Global Strategy Monitoring and Indicator Framework. This is also
an area the new High Level Working Group on Health and Human Rights could champion as part of its one-year mandate.

While many provisions are therefore in place, and we have witnessed a surge of recommendations to enhance citizen inclusion in accountability processes, renewed advocacy efforts and partnerships will be necessary to ensure these are realised.

Provisions and recommendations have positively highlighted the need for inclusive country platforms and citizen voice within formal accountability mechanisms, but ultimately it will be up to these country level mechanisms themselves to ensure the full cycle of accountability reaches the ‘act and remedy’ stage to redress issues raised by citizens.

The connections for upward, downward and across accountability must be a central concern moving forward. For example, while national reviews for the SDGs are intended to contribute to global accountability at the HLPF, such national reviews remain voluntary. Similarly, global progress reviews through the WHA and HLPF, and regional reviews offer further opportunity for citizen inclusion, but ultimately the recommendations made in these spaces for ‘act and remedy’ need to be translated into action through country level platforms. In this way, regular, inclusive and effective country accountability platforms must be the anchor upon which this broader accountability platform rests.