



Commission on Information and Accountability for  
Women's and Children's Health



**COMMISSION ON INFORMATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY FOR  
WOMEN'S AND CHILDREN'S HEALTH**

FIRST MEETING OF THE COMMISSION  
26 January 2011  
Geneva, Switzerland

**Note for the Record**

***Introduction***

The First meeting of the *Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health* took place on 26 January 2011 at the World Health Organization's headquarters in Geneva. Eighteen Commissioners were present at the meeting that was co-chaired by H.E. Jakaya Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania, and Mr Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada. Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), and Dr Hamadou Touré, Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), served as vice-chairs. Several observers were in attendance on behalf of Commissioners unable to personally attend the meeting.

***Agenda and Discussion***

The main agenda items for the First meeting of the Commissioners were presentations and discussions on the work to date of the two Working Groups - on 'Accountability for Results' and on 'Accountability for Resources'. Commissioners examined the landscape analyses prepared by the Working Groups as well as proposed recommendations for the development of an accountability framework.

Commissioners endorsed three dimensions of accountability - monitoring, review and remedy - supported by an approach of continuous improvement through learning. Key themes of the discussion among Commissioners included the need for political commitment, accountability of all stakeholders, building on existing tools and mechanisms, independent mechanisms for validation of data at the national level, and the importance of an accountability framework being transparent and applicable to all countries. Commissioners discussed integrating cross-cutting factors - such as equity issues, capacity building and the innovative use of information communication technology - which also need to be addressed to make progress on women's and children's health. Commissioners proposed that human rights be framed as an underlying principle of the Commission.

The agenda also included an item on outreach and the need to engage all stakeholders, including civil society and the private sector. Commissioners requested that a targeted outreach strategy be developed.

### ***Outcomes of the First Meeting***

Commissioners acknowledged the challenges identified by the two Working Groups, including weak data sources, gaps in data, limited institutional capacity and duplication of donors' monitoring efforts. Agreeing that bold action will be required to address these challenges and accelerate progress on women's and children's health, Commissioners quickly reached consensus on three key decisions to guide the path forward for the development of the accountability framework:

- **Foundation:** The framework must be anchored at the **country level** and build on current tools and mechanisms, such as National Health Accounts. The framework must underscore the importance of strengthening national, district and local capacity to produce, monitor, analyse and report on data.
- **Scope:** It must be **focused** and **streamlined** – with a small number of indicators– in order to make it practical and operational. The accountability framework should be applicable to **all countries**, rich or poor, with a focus on MDGs 1c, 4, 5, and 6. A simple, core methodology would be necessary for the framework to be put into practice by countries with least capacity. Case studies or pilots will be used to refine this core methodology.
- **Mechanism:** The reporting mechanism must be practical and sustainable and should build on existing institutional structures for tracking resources, commitments and results.

### ***Next Steps***

The meeting closed on a note of collective commitment by Commissioners to seize the opportunity of unprecedented international support to address women's and children's health.

The Working Groups will continue to analyse the technical dimensions that will form the core of the framework for accountability over the next two months for ongoing review by the Commissioners. A draft framework will be presented at the Second and final meeting of the Commissioners to take place in May 2011.