

2017 TRANSFORMATIVE ACCOUNTABILITY FOR ADOLESCENTS

Accountability for the Health and
Human Rights of Women, Children
and Adolescents in the 2030 Agenda

SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS



INDEPENDENT
ACCOUNTABILITY
PANEL

EVERY WOMAN, EVERY CHILD, EVERY ADOLESCENT.

In September 2015, the United Nations Secretary-General launched the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030 to help further the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The Strategy builds on 15 years of progress under the Millennium Development Goals and the Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) movement. A strategic priority for EWEC is to ensure strong implementation of the SDGs.

To this end, the United Nations Secretary-General appointed the Every Woman Every Child's Independent Accountability Panel (IAP). The Panel provides an independent assessment of progress and challenges to help strengthen the response from the international health community and countries.

The IAP is comprised of distinguished panellists from diverse regions and backgrounds that range from human rights experts to humanitarian leaders to statisticians. These panellists are empowered to command attention from the global community across the full range of the updated Global Strategy's accountability framework – to monitor, review, act and remedy – and across the spectrum of issues that comprise the Global Strategy's “Survive, Thrive, and Transform” themes.

The IAP members are: Carmen Barroso (Brazil) and Kul Chandra Gautam (Nepal), Co-Chairs; Brenda Killen (Ireland); Pali Lehohla (South Africa); Winfred Osimbo Lichuma (Kenya); Elizabeth Mason (United Kingdom); Vinod K. Paul (India); Giorgi Pkhakadze (Georgia); Dakshitha Wickremarathne (Sri Lanka); and Alicia Ely Yamin (United States of America).

2017:

Transformative accountability for adolescents: accountability for the health and human rights of women, children and adolescents in the 2030 agenda. Summary of Recommendations

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RECOMMENDATIONS TO TRANSFORM ACCOUNTABILITY



United Nations
Secretary-General
António Guterres said
upon taking office,
*"A strong culture of
accountability...requires
effective and independent
evaluation mechanisms."*
We agree.

Charged by the United Nations Secretary-General with providing an independent snapshot of progress through the lens of accountability – of *who is responsible for delivering on promises, to whom, and how* – the IAP's 2017 report explores opportunities for fast-tracking implementation of the Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescents' Health 2016-2030. The focus of this year's report is on adolescents, who hold the central promise for accelerated progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Significant progress has been made for women and children in the past two decades, but the health and rights of millions of adolescents are at risk of being eroded, with grave repercussions for their and the world's future. The consequences of inaction must be averted now through smart policies and smart investments – for the benefit of adolescents, and for all.

The IAP presents a summary of the report's six major recommendations. Applying its framework of *monitor, review, act and remedy*, they focus on how governments, parliaments, human rights institutions, development cooperation partners, donors, the UN system and civil society, working with and for adolescents, can more effectively drive forward the Global Strategy and 2030 Agenda promises. We position human rights and inter-generational equity at the forefront, and emphasize whole-of-government, whole-of-society approaches to tackle discrimination and inequalities that underlie the world's costly, but preventable, health burden. In particular, we call on all stakeholders to make adolescents visible, as a distinct population group 1.2 billion strong, and make them count across decision-making and accountability processes. And above all, we underscore that without participatory accountability, independent civic engagement, transparency and oversight, commitments lose their meaning and are destined to disappoint.



1. Lock in Accountability to Achieve the Global Strategy and the SDGs

The IAP calls for the global partners of the Global Strategy and the High-Level Steering Group for Every Woman Every Child to lead the way in transforming accountability. This can be accomplished by moving to a focus on accountability for action, especially at national levels, while continuing to strengthen monitoring efforts.

The global partners should make sure that the new Every Woman Every Child 2018-2020 Partners Framework specifies explicit roles and plans for strengthening accountability functions at global and country levels. The adoption of the Framework in 2017 is an important and welcome step in this direction. Upgrading it to enhance performance on accountability would serve to encapsulate all our suggestions below, building on the partners' aspirations and efforts underway. Joint annual progress reviews for mutual accountability among the global partners should also be considered.

The Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General, with the support of the global partners, should revisit procedures so that all Every Woman Every Child commitments, partnerships and programmes satisfy the same screening, approval and reporting requirements – with monitoring and accountability built-in from start to finish. For transparency, all commitments and reports should be posted in full on the initiative's public website.

The global partners, namely the United Nations H6 Partnership agencies, the global funds, donors and the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH) constituencies, should invest in national capacities for strengthening accountability processes, encompassing both government-led participatory mechanisms and social accountability initiatives involving young people.

The global partner secretariats should be merged, bringing together the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General, PMNCH, the United Nations H6 Partnership (and possibly IAP) secretariats, working in close collaboration with the global funds. Coordination across all the global funds should also systematically ensure synergies across investment portfolios and harmonization of approaches, including in the area of adolescent health. The merger could significantly streamline the Every Woman Every Child Global Strategy architecture, enhance collaboration and efficiencies, improve delivery to country levels, and strengthen accountability. There should be only *two central reports dedicated to the Global Strategy*, one on monitoring data led by PMNCH and the other on accountability by the IAP.



2. Make Adolescents Visible and Measure What Matters

All Member States, United Nations System entities and other stakeholders should ensure reporting and the use of disaggregated data on adolescents across global, regional and national monitoring and accountability processes. Quantitative and qualitative data available from a range of sources should be fully exploited and disaggregated, and reporting should be informed by independent accountability. Development of a *multi-sectoral Adolescent Health and Well-Being Index* should be considered.



3. Foster Whole-of-Government Accountability to Adolescents

All Ministries that affect adolescent health and well-being, particularly those relevant for prevention, should ensure that multi-sectoral plans and monitoring, review and remedy systems are effectively in place, including in humanitarian settings. All stakeholders should form part, paying particular attention to determinants of adolescent health (e.g., poverty, discrimination, violence, marketing of tobacco and unhealthy foods, among others).

Harness Demographic Dividends:

To effectively manage demographic transitions, the IAP encourages governments to develop and track multi-sectoral plans and investments on adolescents' health, gender equality and rights, with the support of development cooperation partners.

Make Schools Work for Adolescents' Well-Being:

Ministries of Health and Ministries of Education, in collaboration with Ministries of Finance, should establish joint planning, monitoring and accountability mechanisms to ensure that schools are of quality, and that they are accessible, equitable, affordable, safe and have appropriate sanitation facilities, for all girls and boys. School-based health programmes are strategic for empowering adolescents with prevention education, knowledge and critical thinking skills for self-care and informed decision-making on issues such as smoking, poor diet, physical exercise, ensuring vaccinations (including for HPV), prevention and early detection of mental health conditions and violence, sexual and reproductive health, and hygiene and sanitation.

All laws and policies that pose barriers to adolescents' health and violate their rights must be lifted.

Ensure Effective Oversight Institutions:

The autonomy, authority, capacities and awareness of national human rights, judicial, parliamentary and independent auditing institutions to protect human rights and health, including of adolescents, must be strengthened.

4. Make Universal Health Coverage Work for Adolescents

“Suicide has become one of the main killers of adolescents but its roots in gender or other social systems of power are rarely viewed as concerns for Universal Health Care.”

– 2016 Report by the Reflection Group on the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

Ministries of Health and Ministries of Finance should ensure that all adolescents have free access at the point-of-service delivery to a package of essential goods and services – with specified monitoring, accountability and oversight mechanisms for protection of their right to health. A range of health services should be considered in line with those spelled out in the Global Strategy, including for mental health, anaemia prophylaxis, HPV vaccination, comprehensive sexuality education, and counseling and services for sexual and reproductive health and for survivors of gender-based and sexual violence. Particular attention will need to be paid to marginalized groups and to involving adolescents throughout, as well as to lifting legal and other barriers such as out-of-pocket user fees.

5. Boost Accountability for Investments, including for Adolescents’ Health and Well-Being

High impact, cost effective solutions to improve adolescent health can yield huge benefits and billions in savings, reaping demographic dividends.

Ministries of Health and Education, and other key sectors responsible for delivering to adolescents, should increase resources for adolescent health and adopt adolescent-responsive budgeting. In reporting to Ministries of Finance and parliaments, sectoral ministries should justify investments with explicit attention to adolescents’ health and development. All relevant constituencies, including young people, should be involved in the process of setting and monitoring budget priorities.

The accountability of development cooperation partners should be strengthened, including of members of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), by updating standards on aid effectiveness for the SDGs in relation to bilateral donors’ programmes and multi-stakeholder partnerships, including their funding of multilateral organizations. The OECD Development Assistance Committee (DAC), in collaboration with the Global Partnership for Effective Development Cooperation, should consider options such as: adopting an adolescent policy marker to track Official Development Assistance (ODA); supporting donor peer learning and developing guidelines on adolescent health; and investing in countries’ accountability processes and social accountability. Ongoing improvements are needed to enhance the effectiveness of the United Nations Development System, including how it is financed.

6. Unleash the Power of Young People, Move Away from Tokenism

Transformation is needed in how programmes are developed with and for adolescents and how we practice accountability, recognizing their rights and their roles as change agents and as experts for effective policy development.

Governments, donors, the UN System, the global funds and civil society should establish and strengthen mechanisms for young people's meaningful participation in holding Global Strategy stakeholders to account at global, regional and national levels. Their effective engagement should be systematically institutionalized, including across inter-governmental processes.

The e-Generation should be empowered to leverage the full potential of the digital age for civic participation and accountability for their health and rights. Governments, the education system, technology companies, parliaments and other oversight mechanisms should step in to stop online abuses and protect children's rights to privacy. Digital literacy and online safety should form part of the educational curriculum, engaging parents, teachers and other professionals who work with adolescents to embrace the *e-world* we live in.



The IAP is the only mechanism in the Every Woman Every Child ecosystem that provides an independent review of how efforts to achieve the Global Strategy are being conducted.