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# The UN Global Compact and the EWEC partners

## RECOMMENDATION 4

**The UN Global Compact and the EWEC partners should strengthen their monitoring and accountability standards for engagement with the business sector, with an emphasis on women’s, children’s and adolescents’ health. They should advocate for accountability of the for-profit sector to be put on the global agenda for achieving UHC and the SDGs, including at the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Health Summit. The UN H6 Partnership entities and the GFF should raise accountability standards in the country programmes they support.**

In the context of the UN Secretary-General’s proposals for system-wide reform of partnerships with the private sector, our recommendations reflect standards that are common practice among development and UN agencies—but currently are not necessarily expected of, nor applied, when it comes to the for-profit sector.

### 4.1. The UN Global Compact Board and Office should strengthen accountability standards to protect the right to health among women, children and adolescents.

Building on the UN Global Compact’s efforts to improve companies’ engagement in the SDGs, including more recently in the area of health, accountability standards must be strengthened. This, in turn, can reverberate across the wider UN system’s practices and those of corporations becoming increasingly involved. Strengthening business sector accountability is also strategic for UN Member States: UN Country Teams are poised to play an important role in facilitating private sector engagement at the national level, including through the UN Global Compact’s Local Networks.

## KEY MEASURES

***Bolster due diligence standards and practices for accepting and retaining members to ensure that the health impacts of their operations are addressed, and to better align these with the SDGs. This should include scrutiny of company records regarding, for example, the provision of healthy working conditions and insurance coverage for employees, as well as the impacts of their operations on community health. The review should also comprise positive criteria, such as whether health services are provided for employees, and if their quality is monitored.***

***Encourage corporations wishing to join to undergo health impact assessments, and to do so periodically thereafter. This should include improvements in the transparency of reporting, as well as the disclosure of potential causes or actual incidents of harm, and how these are being remedied.***

**Prompt companies to coordinate and collaborate with national and local authorities** to ensure alignment of their CSR initiatives and operations with the country's public health priorities and standards.

**Proactively encourage corporate members to undertake external evaluations of their health-focused initiatives**, in particular those addressing women's, children's and adolescents' well-being, and to make the results publicly available.

**Commission an external thematic evaluation of corporate policies, initiatives and impacts on health** in a cross-section of companies. This would serve as a baseline for developing more robust guidance and standards to support companies' learning and improvements.

**Open a space on the UN Global Compact website for independent parties, including civil society and academia, to publicly post evidence and assessments of industry performance**, a practice that already exists for some inter-governmental UN processes.

In relation to UN system-wide reforms, the UN Global Compact's Board and its Chair (the UN Secretary-General), as well as the UN H6 Partnership Heads of Agency, should:

- **Ensure that the issue of business engagement and accountability for women's, children's and adolescents' health and rights is made an explicit agenda item and work stream of the UN system's inter-agency platforms addressing private sector engagement, at both the principals and working levels.**
- **Involve civil society in processes to determine due diligence and accountability standards for qualifying corporations as partner-ready for engagement with the UN**, ensuring inclusion of organizations specialized in women's, children's and adolescents' health and gender equality. For purposes of transparency, criteria for participation should include public disclosure of funds received from the business sector by civil society organizations.

#### **4.2. The EWEC global partners should ensure systematic application of robust monitoring and accountability standards with relation to engagement of the business sector, including to the support they provide governments for implementing the Global Strategy.**

The EWEC global community is well-positioned to play a leadership role in innovating and modelling private sector accountability for women's, children's and adolescents' health at the global as well as the country level, where many of the partners have a presence. The strategic positioning of the PMNCH Private Sector Constituency and the for-profit EWEC commitment-makers as EWEC champions should be leveraged to this end, including through cross-constituency collaboration and support from the UN H6 and other EWEC partners. Global partners can also advocate for civil society organizations to systematically incorporate explicit attention to the for-profit sector into their work, and can support them in doing so.

**The EOSG should enable the PMNCH Secretariat to assume full responsibility for coordinating and managing improvements across the full cycle of EWEC commitments, including those of governments and corporations.** Building on PMNCH efforts to strengthen standards, improvements in the management and processing of all EWEC commitments are required. While gaps in accountability standards are not unique to the commitments of business partners, extra care is warranted in engaging this sector to preserve the integrity and credibility of the EWEC initiative. The capacities of the PMNCH Secretariat will need to be strengthened to adequately manage private sector commitments.



**The PMNCH should build in accountability standards from the start of private sector EWEC commitments.**

This should be achieved by facilitating the establishment of publicly accessible exclusionary criteria, as well as a due diligence process, governing EWEC private sector commitments; and by revisiting the submission and reporting questionnaires to strengthen accountability standards and requirements (for example, on data disaggregation, monitoring plans, external impact evaluations and civil society participation).

**The EWEC High-Level Steering Group should help put accountability of the for-profit sector on the global agenda for achieving UHC and the SDGs, including at the 2019 High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development and the Health Summit during next year's UN General Assembly.** The IAP appeals to UN Member States, the UN Secretary-General (also in his function as Co-Chair of the EWEC High-Level Steering Group) and the Government of Japan—as the G20 Presidency in 2019 and a champion of UHC—to support achieving this. This should form part of the Steering Group's broader strategy, which includes placing private sector accountability for women's, children's and adolescents' health on its own agenda, in fulfilment of its role in stewarding implementation of the Global Strategy.

**The UN H6 Partnership entities and the GFF should apply due diligence and accountability standards to the technical advice and country programmes they support involving the private sector.**

## **KEY MEASURES**

***The UN H6 Partnership entities and the GFF should assist governments in establishing meaningful mechanisms for planning private sector engagement and tracking performance, such as complaint and grievance mechanisms, and community involvement in monitoring. This should include strengthening implementation of the GFF Civil Society Strategy, in collaboration with the PMNCH, to ensure its even application across country settings.***

***The UN H6 Partnership should facilitate the development of technical guidance on monitoring and accountability standards for business engagement in women's, children's and adolescents' health, in support of companies as well as UN Country Teams and Global Compact Local Networks, among other national partners. The process should fully involve academics and civil society, as well as consultation with companies.***

***The WHO and the World Bank should ensure that global monitoring of UHC captures for-profit providers.***

***The WHO should facilitate and strengthen the provision of legal advisory services to support governments in regulating the pharmaceutical and food industries.***