

Commission on information and accountability for women's and children's health

The United Nations has convened a high-level Commission to propose ways to make countries and their partners more accountable for women's and children's health.

The Commission on Information and Accountability for Women's and Children's Health will propose a framework for global reporting, oversight and accountability of women's and children's health. The accountability framework will:

- Identify a core set of indicators and measurement needs for women's and children's health;
- Propose an action plan to improve registration of vital events – births and deaths – in low-income countries;
- Address how to improve tracking of resources and expenditures at global and country levels;
- Explore opportunities for innovation in information technology to improve access to reliable information on resources and outcomes.

The framework will bring greater transparency to the flow of resources. It will allow expenditures to be tracked and linked to the results of programmes. Knowing which programmes work will help countries to target all their resources more efficiently to save lives.

The concept for the Commission arose from the UN summit on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) held in September 2010. UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon launched the Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health – an ambitious agenda for collective action to improve the health of women and children, and accelerate progress on the health-related MDGs.

The Global Strategy aims to save the lives of 16 million women and children under five years of age by 2015, prevent 33 million unwanted pregnancies, protect 120 million children from pneumonia and 88 million children from stunting, advance the control of malaria and HIV/AIDS, and ensure access for women and children to quality facilities and skilled health workers in the world's 49 poorest countries.

At the summit, countries and their partners pledged \$US 40 billion to the Global Strategy over five years and called for greater accountability

to ensure these resources achieve the expected results. This will be done by integrating service delivery and funding platforms, involving a wide range of stakeholders, research and innovation, and tracking progress through an accountability framework.

The Accountability Commission will be co-chaired by Jakaya Kikwete, President of the United Republic of Tanzania and Stephen Harper, Prime Minister of Canada. The Secretary-General of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Hamadoun I. Touré, and the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO), Margaret Chan, will act as vice chairs of the Commission.

Commissioners have been appointed from developed and developing countries, academia, civil society and the private sector.

Two working groups of technical experts will guide the work of the Commission. One will address how to improve accountability for results – the outcome of programmes – and will be chaired by Richard Horton, chair of the Health Metrics Network and editor of *The Lancet*. The other will address the best way to ensure accountability for resources. It will be chaired by Anne Mills, professor of health economics and policy at the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine.

Three characteristics mark the work of this new Commission.

First, with only five years to the target date for the Millennium Development Goals, the Commission will work rapidly and complete its report by May 2011.

Second, the Commission is action-oriented. It will propose an accountability framework and an action plan.

Third, it is inclusive. The Commission will build on existing global and country-level processes to increase coordination and reduce the difficulty of meeting the demands for health information. It will draw on the wealth of experience in many countries and many sectors through the use of internet-based information technologies and social media.

http://www.who.int/topics/millennium_development_goals/accountability_commission

