



## Terms of Reference

### **The United Nations Secretary-General's Independent Accountability Panel for Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent**

The 2016-2030 Global Strategy for Women's, Children's and Adolescent's Health (Global Strategy)<sup>1</sup> envisages bringing global accountability for implementation under a unified framework. One part of this framework is the Independent Accountability Panel for Every Woman, Every Child, Every Adolescent (IAP) established by the United Nations Secretary-General in 2015.

#### **A. Mandate and Aims**

1. The IAP is an independent group of internationally-recognized experts appointed by the United Nations Secretary-General with the responsibility of providing rigorous, independent and transparent assessment of progress on implementing the Global Strategy, under the overall rubric of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. More specifically, the mandate of the Secretary-General's Independent Accountability Panel (IAP) is centred on assessing the state of the world's accountability for delivery on the Global Strategy's vision and commitments to the health and well-being of women, children and adolescents, taking a gender equality and human rights-based approach.
2. In the fulfillment of its mandate and functions, the IAP periodically issues recommendations and reports with a view to providing constructive, solution-oriented directions based on the best available evidence and analysis, with the aim of contributing to strengthened accountabilities for accelerated achievement of the Global Strategy and the Sustainable Development Goals.
3. The IAP will be guided by principles and values of human rights, equity, gender equality, inclusiveness and transparency, also in line with core principles of accountability as per its mandate.

#### **B. IAP Functions and Responsibilities**

4. The IAP produces reports on the State of the World's Accountability to the Health and Human Rights of Women, Children and Adolescents, the main platform through which it issues its assessments and recommendations to the international community. To be effective, these reports are expected to garner global attention across a wide range of policy-making circles and stakeholders, including by identifying practical examples of effective accountability mechanisms, solutions for addressing critical gaps, and addressing emerging themes.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.everywomaneverychild.org/global-strategy/>

5. In carrying out its functions, the IAP will utilize reliable and credible information routinely provided by a range of sources, including the United Nations System agencies, academia, civil society, and independent monitoring groups and bodies, such as national human rights institutions. It will also invite stakeholder contributions and the submission of evidence that may inform the IAP's reviews and analyses, including on good practices, challenges and areas in need of improvement.
6. The IAP will formally submit its reports to the High-Level Steering Group (HLSG) of Every Woman, Every Child, which is Chaired by the United Nations Secretary-General. As an important resource for the HLSG's discussions and strategic steer to EWEC partners, it is envisioned that this report will be included in the agenda of the HLSG meetings and shared in advance for reference.
7. The IAP disseminates its recommendations and reports widely to Member States and other stakeholders, including from civil society, academia, donors, the private sector, and the Every Woman Every Child global partners and architecture. As such, it is anticipated that the IAP reports and recommendations would feed into the deliberations of key global health financing institutions, partnerships, policy fora, and programs such as the Global Financing Facility (Investors' Group), The Global Fund, GAVI, FP2020, H6, The Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), and that the IAP will make use of relevant evaluations from these institutions. As an independent body, the IAP is also encouraged to engage with broader stakeholders to strengthen linkages where appropriate (e.g., High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development, the World Health Assembly and the Human Rights Council), The IAP report is also envisaged as a key advocacy tool for greater action and resources allocated to women's, children's and adolescent's health at global, country and sub-national levels.
8. Beyond the periodic reports, the IAP may also issue interim policy briefs, statements and recommendations, including for specific audiences, constituencies and meetings.

### **C. Membership**

9. The IAP is comprised of ten independent experts, including two Co-Chairs. In the course of the IAP operationalization, additional members or changes in the total configuration may be considered, in accordance with the selection criteria established, by decision of the Executive Office of the UN Secretary-General (EOSG) in consultation with and agreement of the Co-Chairs.
10. The IAP is a fully independent group whose members serve in their personal capacities. As such, they will not represent the positions of, or seek or accept instructions from, any other party. Employees of the United Nations and its specialized agencies are not eligible to serve on the IAP.
11. The criteria for membership and selection to serve in the IAP, and for overall IAP collective composition, are as follows:
  - a. Proven commitment to the objectives and values of the Global Strategy and the IAP.
  - b. Extensive expertise and accomplishments in one or more of the core areas of the Global Strategy, and experience at policy, legal, technical, scientific qualitative and

quantitative research, and programmatic implementation levels; and covering health sector service delivery and health financing, human rights, gender equality, rule of law, monitoring, evaluation and accountability processes and mechanisms, among others. In addition, given the focus on adolescents of the Global Strategy, a representative of young people that satisfies the criteria should be appointed among the IAP Members.

- c. Demonstrated leadership and capacity to work in a multi-sectoral global environment.
  - d. Relevant ongoing experience in government, civil society, the private sector, including from women's and youth movements, parliament, research and academia, law and other relevant professional organizations.
  - e. Excellent communication skills and capacity to interact at the highest policy and political levels, and ability to effectively articulate and communicate to diverse audiences and stakeholders from government, technical and development partners, and civil society, at global, regional and national levels.
  - f. Overall, ensure the IAP as a group is inter-disciplinary and represents geographic and gender diversity, with experience working with a broad range of organizations, constituencies and sectors across countries and regions.
  - g. Disqualifying conflicts of interest, real or perceived, should be minimized, such as related to current employment with entities that may benefit from influencing the report findings or recommendations.
  - h. In addition, the Co-Chairs should have extensive experience in a recognized leadership role at national, regional or global levels.
12. IAP Members, including the Co-Chairs, are appointed by the UN Secretary-General. When rotations are due, nominations of new members will be facilitated through a number of relevant sources, including PMNCH and other core EWEC partners. Such nominations will be submitted in a timely fashion to EOSG in order to ensure smooth transitions for the IAP's functions. with rotation expected every two to three years for Members and every three years for Co-Chairs. In all matters of membership, the IAP Co-Chairs will welcome EOSG information exchange and consultation to advise in the best interests of the IAP and its effective continuity.
13. Members of the IAP shall be appointed to serve for an initial term of two or three years. This initial term may only be extended or renewed once. Should a member be unable to commit sufficient time, he/she may be released from their duties before the end of the term, at the discretion of the Co-Chairs.
14. To ensure continuity and efficiency, the Co-Chairs of the IAP are expected to serve for a minimum of three years. The appointment of new members should ideally be staggered to ensure a balance between renewal and continuity.

#### **D. Roles and Expectations of the IAP Members**

15. IAP members shall uphold the integrity of the IAP and its independence. Members are required to declare any relevant potential conflicts of interest, both on appointment and on a regular basis. Where an IAP Member has a conflict of interest on a specific topic under discussion, the Member is responsible for making the circumstances of the conflict known to the Co-Chairs and will recuse him or herself from participating in that discussion, thereby ensuring that discussions proceed in an open and transparent

manner. Members will maintain the confidentiality of IAP internal communications, exchanges and discussions.

16. IAP members shall:
  - a. Contribute to the IAP's analysis and recommendations via leveraging their knowledge, experience and expertise, and networks;
  - b. Contribute to the distribution and reach of IAP recommendations and reports; and,
  - c. Advocate on behalf of the IAP and in line with its mandate and positions for continued and strengthened engagement of key constituencies in understanding and acting upon IAP recommendations for strengthened accountability.
17. Members of the IAP undertake their roles on a pro bono basis. The expected time commitment to fulfil IAP duties will amount to approximately 20-30 days per year for members, and 30-40 days per year for the Co-Chairs.

#### **E. Meetings and Operational Procedures**

18. The IAP shall meet at least twice per year at in-person meetings. IAP periodic or monthly working sessions may also be convened virtually as determined by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the other members.
19. IAP decision-making shall in general be taken by consensus. On routine matters, or in cases where clear consensus is not fully reached, the Co-Chairs may take decisions on behalf of the IAP, taking into account the views of the IAP Members.
20. A Secretariat shall facilitate the effective functioning of the IAP and its activities, in a manner that supports the IAP's independence and confidentiality of internal deliberations. The Secretariat shall be hosted by the Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH), which will fulfill the role of fiduciary, legal and administrative agent of the IAP, and which preserves its perceived integrity as an independent body. The IAP Secretariat will submit a funding request to the host organization (PMNCH), which will approve the IAP's budget via the PMNCH Executive Committee and based on availability of resources. Activities related to this budget will be solely at the discretion of the IAP Secretariat and will not be dependent on approval by the host organization. While the host organization shall serve as the primary source of financing for the IAP, it need not be the exclusive source.
21. The IAP will regularly assess its impact and reports to draw lessons learned and introduce improvements. The IAP Members will periodically conduct a self-evaluation of its functions, as individual members, and a collective evaluation of the panel as a whole.