

WEB ANNEXES¹. IAP 2020 Report: Caught in the COVID-19 storm: women's, children's and adolescents' health in the context of UHC and the SDGs

Annex 1. Evolution of the EWEC accountability framework

Human rights foundations

- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) positions effective remedy as a fundamental right.¹ The International Covenant of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966) requests states to report on what they have done to uphold the right to health and other rights.² In 2000, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights confirmed that the right to health includes underlying determinants of health, freedom from discrimination, participation and accountability.³
- Paul Hunt, the first UN Special Rapporteur on the right to the highest attainable standard of health (2003–2008),⁴ noted that “like any other human right, the right to health is almost meaningless if unaccompanied by mechanisms of accountability”.⁵ A human rights approach emphasizes obligations and requires all duty-holders to account for their conduct.⁶ This should not be misunderstood as “naming and shaming”, or blame and punishment. Hunt employed the concept of *constructive accountability*, as defined by Lynn Freedman.⁷ This is a process of identifying “what works, so it can be repeated, and what does not, so it can be revised”.⁸ Hunt set out the *monitor, review, remedial action* framework⁹ and the importance of transparency and independent review.¹⁰
- Hunt emphasizes the opportunity and need for an independent review body for the EWEC Global Strategy. This would build on the experience of human rights treaty body mechanisms and add technical expertise to enhance the specificity and actionability of review recommendations. With respect to how members would be selected and appointed, he cites, “numerous precedents within the UN and beyond for the appointment of independent experts who have the confidence of governments and other stakeholders.”⁹
- The linkages between the MDGs and human rights, and shared commitments for women's, children's and adolescents' health and rights, were explained in a publication by a working group on the MDGs and Human Rights for the UN Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health.¹¹

¹ IAP 2020 Report. Caught in the COVID-19 storm: women's, children's and adolescents' health in the context of UHC and the SDGs. Web Annexes (<https://iapewec.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/IAP-2020-Report-Development-Methods-Annexes.pdf>)

- Mappings of global and national accountability mechanisms and lessons^{12,13} inform EWEC partners in setting up the Commission on Information and Accountability (CoIA) that underpinned the first EWEC Global Strategy.

EWEC Global Strategy (2010–2015): CoIA and iERG

- The CoIA working group on accountability for results recommended the creation of National Health Commissions.¹⁴ With government backing, these would coordinate national accountability systems and integration of CoIA recommendations in national planning, budgets and timelines.
- CoIA recommended that a global independent Expert Review Group (iERG)¹⁵ should synthesize all available information and evidence, address discrepancies and make its own analysis and recommendations in an annual report to the UNSG. It also concluded that further thought needs to be given on how better to harmonize accountability efforts.¹⁶
- Both CoIA and the iERG were hosted at WHO. CoIA was co-chaired by President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada, with WHO (Dr Margaret Chan) and ITU (Hamadoun Toure) as vice-chairs. The iERG was chaired by Professor Richard Horton Editor of The Lancet and Joy Phumaphi Executive Secretary of the African Leaders Malaria Alliance.
- The final CoIA report highlighted the importance of learning and continuous improvement, and simplified the accountability framework to a monitor, review and act cycle. It states that monitoring is just the first step towards accountability and that review is needed to evaluate “whether pledges, promises and commitments have been kept”.¹⁷ The framework links accountability for resources to results, i.e. the outputs, outcomes and impacts they produce.¹⁸
- The iERG adopted the CoIA framework of monitor, review and act.¹⁹ In its final report, iERG asserts the importance of independent accountability and calls for much stronger links between monitor, review and act for results and resources. However, the EWEC accountability framework has not been implemented through, or integrated in, a system, with clear partner roles and institutional mechanisms linking these functions.

Updated EWEC Global Strategy (2016–2030): UAF and IAP

- Accountability for the updated EWEC Global Strategy was updated by the development of a multistakeholder unified accountability framework (UAF) to help countries drive results, resources and rights.²⁰ Its functions included: facilitating tracking of resources, results and rights; promoting alignment of national, regional and global investments and initiatives to support the Global Strategy; and contributing to national and SDGs monitoring through the Global Strategy indicator and monitoring framework.²¹ The UAF identified harmonized roles in Global Strategy accountability for partners, for example, for PMNCH²² as host of the IAP secretariat and for Countdown to 2030 as a key partner in monitoring coverage and equity of health services for women, children and adolescents.²³ WHO and H6 partners developed a data portal for Global

Strategy monitoring on the Global health observatory.^{24,25} For Review, the IAP took over from the iERG as the global independent review group for the updated EWEC Global Strategy. The IAP has been co-chaired by Sania Nishtar, Kul Gautam, Carmen Barroso and at the time of the IAP 2020 report, by Joy Phumaphi and Elizabeth Mason.

- In its first report, the IAP built on the CoIA and iERG framework, and amended the accountability cycle to monitor, review, *remedy* and act.^{20,26} This recognizes remedy as a formal enforceable change, including through existing judicial accountability mechanisms at national level. This is at the core of effective remedy for rights and is set out in instruments accepted by states through intergovernmental processes. This also aligned the accountability framework with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which notably sets out the importance of rule of law, access to justice, independent review and effective, accountable and inclusive institutions.
- Subsequent IAP reports applied the updated framework to accountability for adolescents' health (2017)²⁷ and the private sector (2018).²⁸ However, despite these contributions and a decade of EWEC accountability, the need for a better shared understanding of accountability persists.
- The 2019 external evaluation of the IAP highlights strategic and operational challenges related to the EWEC accountability system overall, and specifically in relation to the IAP. The evaluation highlights examples of other independent accountability mechanisms as context for recommendations on the IAP.²⁹
- IAP's 2020 report sets out an accountability framework to bring together essential functions (monitor, review, remedy and act) and features (commit, explain, implement and progress) of effective accountability contributing to universal goals and implemented in unique contexts.³⁰ The updated framework gives due prominence to the importance of institutionalizing accountability functions and features in a 'whole of government and whole of society' approach, and the intrinsic value of a culture of accountability as a driver for learning and progress towards realizing goals and rights.

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