Domestic information and accountability platforms: global and country action
Note for the IHP+ Steering Committee meeting Session 3, June 20, 2014

Recent Action by Global Health Agency Leaders
Strengthening monitoring of results and accountability is one of the Seven Behaviors prioritized for intensified and harmonized action by all development partners, endorsed by global health agency leaders, led by World Bank President Jim Yong Kim and WHO Director General Margaret Chan. In September 2013, global health agency leaders established a working group chaired by Margaret Chan to take stock of global reporting requirements with the goal of reducing the burden on countries. A rapid assessment of the burden of indicators and reporting for health documented how global investments in disease and program specific M&E programs have contributed significantly to very large numbers of indicators for monitoring progress (>600 health indicators), fragmented data collection, and uncoordinated efforts to strengthen country institutional capacity, causing unnecessary reporting burden to countries as well as inefficiencies, and hampering overall analysis and decision-making. The working group proposed the following action points:

- Agree on a core list of indicators with the aim of at least halving the number of indicators on which countries have to report
- Improve the alignment of agencies’ reporting cycles
- Better align investments in country M&E systems
- Operationalize the agenda through a working group under the umbrella of IHP+

The group presented its findings and recommendations to the 5th meeting of Global Health Agency Leaders during the IMF/Bank’s Spring Meetings in April 2014. This meeting decided to continue the work on getting agreement by September 2014 on a set of Core Indicators. The Global Health Agency Leaders will discuss progress during UNGA September 2014, and USAID, WHO and WB will host an Information Summit in early 2015.

IHP+ work in M&E
The IHP+ monitoring and evaluation working group, which includes representatives of multi- and bilateral development partners, academic institutes and civil society, has been in existence since 2009, with the aim of: (i) enhancing harmonization and alignment of global partners with the country M&E platform using common approaches for M&E strengthening; and (ii) supporting and strengthening country-led monitoring, evaluation and review of progress and performance of the national health strategy, and in doing so, improve global reporting on international agreed indicators by countries.

Through the work of the group, a common framework was published in 2011 for strengthening monitoring, evaluation and review of national health strategies, as the basis for a country-led platform for information and accountability. The platform approach is globally supported by Global Fund and GAVI among others and is also linked to the efforts to strengthen country accountability mechanisms as part of the recommendations of the Commission on Information & Accountability for the Global Strategy for Women’s and Children’s Health. Over 60 of the 75 priority countries have developed country accountability roadmaps that include activities to strengthen monitoring of results, tracking of resources, reviews of progress and performance and remedial actions based on reviews, with a focus on women’s and children’s health. The one M&E platform approach is being used by an increasing number of countries, to strengthen availability, quality and use of data used in health sector progress and performance reviews, as the basis for development /revision of national health sector plans.

Additional normative and technical work is required for example to document best practices and to further harmonize methods and tools for strengthening country health information systems and health sector reviews. At country level, too, the challenge is to further develop more unified approaches to data collection, quality assurance and use of data based on country monitoring and review platforms and for strengthening analytical capacity in health system progress and
performance, as part of health sector reviews. Country accountability roadmaps too could become a firmer foundation for alignment of partner support.

**Going forward**

The ultimate goal is to improve monitoring of sector performance and increase the focus on results by measuring fewer things better in a robust national system for information and accountability that all partners align with. IHP+ is part of this larger effort and an overview of the main actions is given below:

1. **International development dialogue and action**
   A. Use the IHP+ platform to broaden the global health leaders working group agenda and include countries. This implies reviving and strengthening the IHP+ Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Working Group. The agenda includes:
      • Develop and publish guidance on a core set of indicators and measurement approaches required to monitor health progress and performance, in support of one country platform for information and accountability. WHO to finalize by Sep 2014
      • Find ways to streamline reporting requirements in order to reduce country reporting burden
      • Find ways to better align investments in country monitoring and accountability systems
      • Monitor the strength of country platforms for information and accountability, for national decision making and international reporting
      • Collaboration to support the implementation of the monitoring and accountability agenda in a selected number of countries (see below).

   B. Global collaboration to develop a clear strategy for results monitoring and accountability within the post-2015 development agenda. The IHP+ M&E TWG will be involved in a series of events and processes including:
      • Technical meetings to prepare for the overall agenda and conference: organization of technical meetings on facility data collection instruments and methods (June 2014), household survey modules standardization (October 2014), measurement of vital statistics as part of CRVS system strengthening etc.
      • Conduct country assessments of the implementation of the COIA roadmaps for women and children’s health, to learn how this has influenced practices in monitoring, review and remedial action and how “new” subject areas such as UHC can best be embedded. WHO is leading this.

2. **Country dialogue and action**

As part of more intensified joint approaches to strengthen national results monitoring and review mechanisms, joint support provided from agencies will focus on strengthening joint analytical reviews of health sector performance and country accountability mechanisms, such as program and health sector reviews.

   • A guidance paper with options on ways to conduct Joint Annual Reviews, building on the 2013 IHP+ review of experience. IHP+ to finalize by Oct 2014.
   • Intensified collaboration between global partners, with country leadership, to operationalize a single country led platform for results monitoring and accountability, including a large reduction of the reporting burden. The goal is to engage at least 8 countries (but the IHP+ working group may decide it can deal with more)

The IHP+ has in its 2014/15 Work Program allocated 500,000 USD to support the agenda outlined above (1 & 2).

The Steering Committee’s is invited to provide comments, and requested to approve the reviving of the IHP+ M&E Technical Working Group as a key element in taking this agenda forward.