



**United Nations General Assembly
Second Committee Special Event on**

“Promoting accountability at all levels: monitoring the post-2015 development agenda”

**United Nations Headquarters, Conference Room 2 (CB)
31 October 2014, 10am – 1pm**

Concept note

Background

Member States have defined the scope of the post-2015 development agenda by calling for a single framework and set of goals, universal in nature and applicable to all countries. Such a universal, non-binding agenda will apply to all stakeholders, underpinned by a renewed global partnership for development. It will also require a much broader accountability framework than the one used for the MDGs, going beyond monitoring to include regular review and evaluation, with the main focus on achieving sustainable development results at all levels.

At the President of the General Assembly’s (PGA’s) Interactive Dialogue on Accountability held in May 2014, Member States emphasized that a universal and transformative agenda needs to respond to specific global, national and regional realities. While the arrangements for the accountability framework of the wide range of commitments remain to be formulated, the broad contours have been identified.

In particular, the post-2015 review, monitoring and accountability framework would need to promote a collaborative environment and offer incentives for all stakeholders to review development achievements. It would need to be rooted in decentralized, people-centred and multi-layered reporting arrangements, building upon and bringing together evidence from accountability mechanisms at the national, regional and global levels.

The main focus of the framework would need to be support to the achievement at the country level. Many mechanisms already exist to monitoring progress, and these mechanisms and efforts could be adapted to fit the new requirements of the post-2015 development agenda. This would require feedback from country level efforts to the global agenda and vice versa.

The United Nations Regional Commissions recently convened regional consultations on an accountability framework for post-2015. The consultations underscored the need for a comprehensive, multi-layered and multi-stakeholder accountability framework as crucial for the success of the post-2015 framework and the achievement of the SDGs. They also emphasized that the accountability is primarily at the national level. Regional platforms could provide space for sharing national experiences on the implementation of the agenda.

At the global level, the review, monitoring and accountability framework will need to offer a comprehensive view of the state of implementation of the wide range of commitments for the post-2015 development agenda. The global framework would need to bring together elements from all levels regarding progress on specific goals, including on financing and the means of implementation, incentivize implementation and promote the sharing of lessons, data and information.

While the specific arrangements for the framework remain to be formulated, elements are now in place that could be utilized for the monitoring and review of a broad range of substantive areas, including the Sustainable Development Goals, outcomes of major United Nations development conferences and summits, the means of implementation and the renewed global partnership for development.

The review of the implementation of conference outcomes, including on the post-2015 development agenda, involves the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and its key functional and subsidiary bodies, and includes particularly the recently established high-level political forum (HLPF) on sustainable development.

As the highest intergovernmental policy-making mechanism, the General Assembly will continue to have a crucial role in providing overall policy guidance that can serve to strengthen and sustain commitments at the political level towards the implementation of the individual conference outcomes and the overall post-2015 development agenda.

The ECOSOC strengthening process has emphasized the Council's role in providing global policy guidance, tracking progress and ensuring the accountability of the work of the United Nations development system. ECOSOC has been mandated to review key issues through its annual theme so as to guide the work of the entire system and promote system-wide coherence and coordination. It was also mandated by the Rio+20 outcome to promote the balanced integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The ECOSOC Development Cooperation Forum (DCF) serves as a key forum for the review of trends in international development cooperation. With its engagement of a wide range of stakeholders, the DCF can review the development cooperation aspects of a renewed global partnership for development and successor arrangements for MDG8. It can also continue to review national mutual accountability and transparency in development cooperation and promoting policy coherence among aid and non-aid policies and the three dimensions of sustainable development.

The HLPF convened under the auspices of the General Assembly and ECOSOC is designed to provide a space for reviewing progress in the implementation of sustainable development commitments, enhancing the integration of the three dimensions of sustainable development in a holistic and cross-sectoral manner at all levels, bringing the results of national and regional reviews to the global level. In the Rio+20 outcome document, Heads of State mandated the HLPF to conduct regular reviews of progress in the implementation of sustainable development. The HLPF has been mandated to conduct such reviews, starting in 2016, on the follow-up and implementation of sustainable development commitments and objectives, including those related to the means of implementation.

Further clarity is needed on the substantive scope and how an accountability framework could work in practice. The framework could build on the goals and targets proposed by the Open Working Group on SDGs, and could also integrate relevant existing accountability mechanisms, such as the efforts, at all levels, to promote mutual accountability in development cooperation. Consideration could also be given to how the framework could be aligned with other relevant existing accountability mechanisms, including the regional peer review mechanisms. These two are very different in nature. A key issue is also to arrive at key recommendations on how stakeholders, such as civil society organizations, the private sector, foundations and others can work within this framework towards the implementation of the agenda.

Objective

The objective of the event is to contribute to the intergovernmental dialogue on monitoring and accountability as part of the ongoing preparations for a post-2015 development agenda. The event aims to:

- Examine key elements for a monitoring and accountability framework for the post-2015 development agenda;
- Offer concrete recommendations on how the features of such a multi-layered framework could be designed and work in practice at all levels; and
- Identify practical aspects of monitoring and accountability, with special attention to:
 - (i) the inclusive and people-centred nature of the accountability framework;
 - (ii) the systematic engagement and meaningful contributions by all development actors in a manner that supports national ownership;
 - (iii) the inter-linkages between accountability mechanisms at all levels;
 - (iv) the capacity needs for tracking progress, producing relevant analysis and data and ensuring the smooth functioning of the framework; and
 - (v) a renewed global partnership for development underpinned by effective means of implementation.

Moderator

- *Mr. Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs, Department of Economic and Social Affairs*

Panellists

- *Her Excellency Ms. María Emma Mejía Vélez, Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, Permanent Representative of Colombia to the United Nations*
- *His Excellency Mr. Ashraf Rashed, Vice-Chairperson, Panel of Eminent Persons, African Peer Review Mechanism*
- *Professor Marc Levy, Deputy Director, Center for International Earth Science Information Network, Earth Institute, Columbia University*
- *Dr. Paul Zeitz, Manager, Mutual Accountability & Transparency Creates High Impact Today, Global Development Incubator*

Discussion questions

Building upon the outcomes of the discussions so far, the discussion could be guided by the following preliminary areas and questions:

- *At what level will the elements of monitoring and review be most effectively carried out? How can national and regional reviews be optimally linked with monitoring and review at the global level?*

- *What will render participation in a new accountability framework attractive to stakeholders at all levels? What incentives can be built into monitoring and review mechanisms to ensure such broad participation?*
- *What should be the scope, guiding principles and key elements of a multi-layered post-2015 monitoring, review and accountability mechanism?*
- *How can monitoring and accountability be pursued in the context of an increased diversity of development actors and the growing role of multi-stakeholder partnerships?*
- *What are the capacity development requirements that will need to be met in support of an effective monitoring and accountability framework and how can the UN development system adapt to the varying needs of countries?*

Format

The special event will be a series of presentations by the panelists followed by an open discussion. The Chair of the Second Committee will open the meeting with brief remarks to frame the discussion. The Moderator will then be invited to conduct the discussion, introducing the panelists and inviting them to make their presentation.

Each panelist will be allowed 10 to 15 minutes to share their perspectives on a specific aspect of the topic. Following the panel presentations, the Moderator will open the discussion for questions from the floor. Questions will be directed to specific or all members of the panel while maintaining a coherent flow in the discussion.