



HUMAN RIGHTS AND AID EFFECTIVENESS: KEY MESSAGES ON MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Introduction

There is growing recognition that human rights and gender equality are functionally essential to achieving the overall goals of the Paris Declaration as well as being agreed objectives of development in themselves. Human rights, including the rights of women to equality and non-discrimination, are part of a universal value system, codified in international treaties to which all countries have subscribed. They provide a shared normative framework for dialogue between donors, partner countries and civil society on priority-setting and aid processes.

KEY MESSAGES

Donors:

- Respect and support the use of international human rights mechanisms, including the Treaty Monitoring Bodies and Special Rapporteurs, to report on donor and partner country commitments and action.
- Strengthen donor partner accountability through provision of information to the public on donor programmes.
- Enable partner country Parliamentary Committees, national human rights institutions and civil society watchdogs to review donor programmes.

Partner countries:

- Establish national human rights institutions with a mandate to report regularly on economic, social and cultural as well as civil and political rights.
- Establish the right to information in legislation and in practice to enable public monitoring of development and budget processes.
- Establish Parliamentary Committees with a mandate to review government and donor programmes to support development.

HUMAN RIGHTS AND MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY: LINKAGES AND PRACTICAL EXAMPLES

Human rights standards and principles are integral to all governments' legislation and policies. In addition to international commitments, national constitutions draw on civil and political human rights and many

contain economic and social rights. Where constitutional rights are used as explicit basis for development strategies and service standards, they provide people with tools for holding governments to account for their commitments.

Human rights accountability processes include UN monitoring mechanisms, regional and national judicial processes, national human rights commissions and ombudspersons as well as parliamentary committees and social reporting and audit mechanisms. These processes often involve a broad range of stakeholders and can strengthen public support for national and sector policies. Creative use of political, legal and administrative mechanisms can strengthen accountability relations at all levels, generating clearer and more sustainable development results.



Peru: Community participation and monitoring of health services. Since 2003, the INGO CARE has worked with Forosalud, a civil society network promoting health rights, to support the participation of women and people from excluded groups in health policy decision making at regional and national levels as well as in local health management boards (CLAS). The findings of their consultations have led to the introduction of Ministry of Health national regulations authorizing health service support for the cultural practice of giving birth in a vertical position, and the banning of fines on families who have home-births, which were being imposed when infants were registered. Forosalud has now established a community monitoring programme in Piura and Puno regions, which links local women's groups to the regional office of the Human Rights Ombudsperson, and reports on the implementation of maternal health service standards. The success of this initiative has informed the current Minister of Health's decision to establish similar monitoring mechanisms for all hospitals.

The right to information and transparency is critical to accountability and enables public monitoring of development programmes and budgets. The Kenya Health Rights Advocacy Network, for example, has recently started to review and monitor Kenya's health sector budget. Their work has been facilitated by the increasing openness of the ministries of Health and Finance to information sharing and provision of calendars setting out details of the budget cycle. Legislation protecting the right to information has also been critical in India to the success of civil society social audits of poverty-alleviation programmes. Public scrutiny has helped to identify measures to improve the effectiveness of the programmes in reaching the rural poor as well as highlighting cases of corruption.

Human rights standards, including rights to information, meaningful participation, accountability and transparency and non-discrimination, provide clear government responsibilities for which all countries can be held accountable. These standards should inform partnerships between donors and governments and help to define the principles of good donorship, as well as sector priorities and triggers for disbursement.



Uganda: UN human rights monitoring and mutual accountability. The UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Health has undertaken two missions to Uganda, reporting on the government's action on neglected diseases as well as the health programme of the Ugandan office of the Swedish International Development Co-operation Agency. The missions have been facilitated by partnerships between the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the World Health Organization and the Uganda Human Rights Commission and have strengthened public accountability and ownership of the health strategy by enabling the engagement of Ugandan CSOs with the Ministry of Health in the strategy review process. As a result of these missions and broad stakeholder engagement, the Ministry of Health has included a gender equality and human rights assessment in the mid-term review of the sector strategy, helping to ensure that the strategy is addressing the underlying causes of ill health in Uganda.

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