

# Transparency and Accountability for Improving Global Governance in Nutrition

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### Key messages

- > Transparency and accountability are, and will continue to be, critical practices in achieving better nutrition at scale.
- > The nutrition community has developed a variety of frameworks, tools and organizational approaches to drive transparency and accountability in nutrition.
- > These frameworks and approaches provide a strong foundation for nutrition in the post-MDG development era, with substantial room for learning and improvement in the first years of the SDGs.
- > In global public health, there exist accountability tools and approaches from which nutrition leaders may draw applicable tactics/uses to strengthen overall accountability and action in nutrition.
- > To apply many of the successful approaches from the public health sector, leaders from the nutrition community must leverage their positions of power to engage all stakeholders in paving a path forward for stronger transparency and accountability in nutrition.

Transparency and accountability are pillars of global governance in nutrition. These practices are the glue that connects commitments to action.<sup>1</sup> Strengthening the commitments and actions of all stakeholders – governments, business and civil society – is one of the key themes of the 2015 Global Nutrition Report.<sup>2</sup>

The 2015 SUN Global Gathering hailed accountability as a cornerstone for effective partnerships to deliver on the promises of improved nutrition, which include health, social and economic benefits (see **Table 1**).

However, driving accountability in nutrition is challenging for many reasons. Monitoring action and commitments to nutrition requires leaders from different sectors (e.g., health, education, and agriculture) to advance coordinated action at the global, regional, national, and community levels. Also, driving accountability is further complicated by a lack of trust across key stakeholder groups in business, civil society and government, as well as in donor organizations.<sup>2,4</sup>

As the international nutrition community positions itself to work within the new, ambitious Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) agenda, all stakeholder groups must find a way to address the lack of trust and complex stakeholder ecosystem to build more of the effective partnerships that are needed to achieve our commitments to nutrition.<sup>5</sup>

**“All stakeholder groups must find a way to build more effective partnerships”**

The release of the 2015 Global Nutrition Report is the latest stride in a series of efforts aimed at improving transparency and accountability in nutrition. The report confronts the issues of poor quality commitments, lack of transparency, and the lack of

**TABLE 1:** Select benefits associated with eliminating undernutrition in young children.

Boost GNP by 11% in Africa and Asia	Further boost GNP by supercharging the demographic divide	Prevent more than one third of child deaths per year
Reduce burden of disability for children under 4 years of age by more than half	Increase school attainment by at least one year	Boost wage rates by 5%–9%
Make children 33% more likely to escape poverty as adults	Make women 10% more likely to own their own business when they become adults	Break the intergenerational cycle of poverty

Adapted from Haddad 2012<sup>3</sup>

trust across stakeholder groups, and this year added a chapter dedicated to the private sector, proposing a set of recommendations for improving accountability and building trust across the nutrition landscape. **Tables 2 and 3** provide an overview of some of the existing nutrition-related accountability frameworks, tools and organizational approaches in place to support transparency and accountability.

The community has built a strong foundation from which to work to ensure accountability in nutrition. However, in order to fully optimize the investments made in this area over the years, nutrition leaders will need to follow the example of the approaches and tactics employed by other sectors – namely global public health – if they are to fully optimize and improve upon existing accountability mechanisms and thus drive better, faster results in nutrition. These include, but are not limited to, elevating visibility of results above and beyond the nutrition community to heads of state and international media; more inclusive

and constructive engagement with the private sector; alignment with other sectors, especially the humanitarian space; and, last but not least, the Global Goals.

## “In the health sector, three accountability tools stand out”

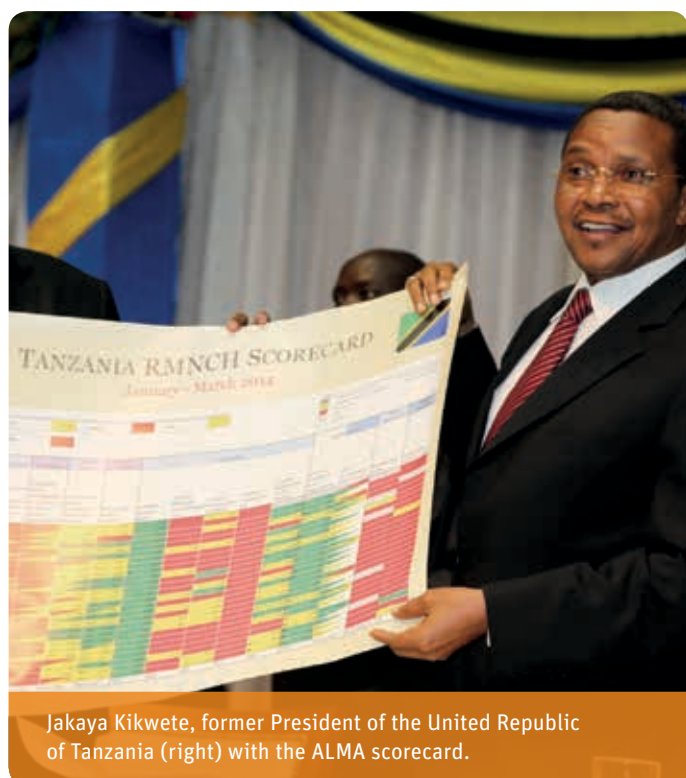
### Other accountability tools and approaches from the health sector

In the health sector, three accountability tools stand out as particularly relevant examples from which nutrition leaders can draw applicable tactics and uses to strengthen overall accountability and action in nutrition.

**1)** The **ALMA Scorecard** is a management and accountability tool created by the African Leaders’ Malaria Alliance (ALMA) – a coalition of 49 African Heads of State and Government working across country and regional borders to reduce deaths from malaria in Africa.<sup>17</sup> The Scorecard is used at forums for Heads of State and Ministers of Health, where stakeholders review progress and address challenges related to meeting malaria targets. The Scorecard supports country- and regional-based monitoring and accountability systems that track results on a quarterly basis, while helping stakeholders identify bottlenecks and facilitate appropriate action to reduce malaria. This latter function allows many countries to use the Scorecard as a management tool at national, regional and district or community levels.

ALMA’s work in developing, implementing and using the scorecards at various forums has been critical to keeping malaria high on the political agenda in recent years, which has translated into a strong, enabling environment for financing and action on malaria on the ground.

In the SDG era, nutrition leaders may take a leaf out of the ALMA/malaria community’s copybook on two fronts: **(1)** seek out opportunities to regularly engage heads of state and other politically influential leaders to review and highlight progress and challenges in nutrition and sustainable development;



Jakaya Kikwete, former President of the United Republic of Tanzania (right) with the ALMA scorecard.

**TABLE 2:** Frameworks and tools for improving accountability in nutrition <sup>6,7,8,9,10,11</sup>

Accountability framework   Mechanism description	Intended audience   Primary users				
	Government	Civil society	Donors	Private	Academia
<p><b>Hunger and Nutrition Commitment Index (HANCI)</b></p> <p>This index compares and ranks developing countries whose hunger and undernutrition status is considered severe or alarming.</p> <p>&gt; HANCI evolved from the Hunger Reduction Commitment Index (HRCI), by adding and de-coupling hunger and nutrition commitments under three themes: spending, policies and laws. Indicators are split between commitment to hunger reduction (10 indicators) and commitment to addressing undernutrition (12 indicators).</p>	X	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Global Nutrition Report (GNR)</b></p> <p>This report aims to provide another layer of accountability in nutrition at the global, regional and national levels through reviewing existing processes, highlighting progress in combating malnutrition, identifying gaps, and proposing ways to fill them.</p> <p>&gt; Through this, the GNR helps to guide action, build accountability and spark increased commitment for further progress towards reducing malnutrition much faster.</p>	X	X	X	X	X
<p><b>Access to Nutrition Index (ATNI)</b></p> <p>This index assesses and ranks the world's largest manufacturers on their nutrition-related commitments, practices and performance.</p> <p>&gt; ATNI aims to encourage companies to increase consumer access to nutritious products and responsibly exercise their influence on consumer choice and behavior.</p> <p>&gt; The ultimate goal is to facilitate improved diets and a reduction in the serious global problems of both obesity and undernutrition.</p>		X	X	X	
<p><b>FTSE4 Good Index Series</b></p> <p>This series of Indices is designed to measure the performance of companies demonstrating strong Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) practices.</p>		X		X	
<p><b>Global Hunger Index (GHI)</b></p> <p>This index measures and tracks hunger by country, by region and at a global level. It highlights successes and failures in hunger reduction and provides insights into the drivers of hunger.</p> <p>&gt; The GHI combines three equally weighted indicators – undernourishment, child underweight, and child mortality – in one index number.</p> <p>&gt; The GHI ranks countries on a 100-point scale. Zero is the best score (no hunger), and 100 is the worst, although neither of these extremes is reached in practice.</p>	X	X	X		X

Use	Notes for discussion; what's missing
<p>The HANCI shows that committing to hunger reduction is not the same as committing to improve nutrition. The Index appears to have been used effectively by individuals and organizations engaged in research and advocacy to understand and influence the commitments of governments and donors to reducing hunger <i>and</i> improving nutrition.</p>	<p>How to integrate this index with other efforts?                      &gt; Risk of redundancy in reporting and data.</p>
<p>Used as a resource for stakeholders to advocate increased financing, policy changes and greater cross-sector accountability and engagement. May also be used to drive greater transparency and, in turn, accountability, around commitments to improve and/or finance nutrition (e.g., tracking N4G commitments), increased financing, policy changes and greater cross-sector accountability and engagement.</p>	<p>The 2015 report highlights the need for greater accountability in nutrition, dedicating two chapters to new approaches to reinforce regulation and legislation as key mechanisms for improving enforcement in nutrition.                      &gt; However, not enough attention is paid to how civil society should be held to account. The assumption is that civil society doesn't need it, but citizens have interests that must be understood and made transparent, too.                      &gt; The GNR dedicates 2 out of 10 recommendations to the theme of strengthening accountability. The Report may be difficult for nutrition practitioners to use, especially those operating at community levels where nutrition program implementation is often taking place.</p>
<p>Companies with relatively strong rankings use the ATNI as a means to highlight their positive contributions to global development and nutrition. Advocates and policy organizations use the index to try to drive greater accountability in the private sector.</p>	<p>Problem = self-reported data?                      &gt; Coming soon: will also develop and publish "Spotlight Indexes" that score and rate the largest Food &amp; Beverage manufacturers in each Spotlight Country.</p>
<p>Used by fund managers and investors in four main ways:                      1) To create financial products focused on responsible investment;                      2) To identify environmentally &amp; socially responsible companies;                      3) As a reference for transparent and evolving global ESG standards;                      4) As a benchmark to track the performance of responsible investment portfolios.</p>	<p>Conducts only limited assessment of the health and nutrition impacts of products. Recent research suggests that inclusion in, or exclusion from, the index does not significantly affect firm behavior (Curran and Moran<sup>10</sup>) and that investors focusing on the indices do no worse on average than those who invest without regard to them (Collison et al<sup>9</sup>).</p>
<p>The index is updated annually and used to raise awareness and understanding of regional and country differences in hunger, and to trigger actions to reduce hunger.</p>	<p>How to integrate this index with other efforts?                      &gt; Risk of redundancy in reporting and data.                      &gt; How could this be combined with HANCI?</p>

**TABLE 3:** Organizational approaches aimed at improving accountability in nutrition <sup>12,13,14,15,16</sup>

Organizational approaches aimed at improving accountability in nutrition	Practical application
<p><b>WHO Nutrition Governance Score</b></p> <p>Assesses a country's commitment to nutrition through examining the presence of key elements that include the existence of a national nutrition plan/strategy, adoption of a national nutrition policy, regular nutrition monitoring and surveillance, the existence of a line item for nutrition in the health budget, and more. A value of 1 is afforded to the presence of each element, with the governance scores ranging from 0 to 11. The strength of nutrition governance was considered <i>weak</i> for countries scoring from 0 to 6.9, <i>medium</i> for those scoring from 7 to 9.9, and <i>strong</i> for those scoring from 10 to 11.</p>	<p>The WHO uses this score to inform the agency's prioritization of nutrition investments in many of the countries where it operates.</p>
<p><b>Committee on World Food Security (CFS)</b></p> <p>An intergovernmental body for coordination, policy convergence and coherence, as well as support and advice to countries and regions. The committee is open to all UN member states. As at 2012, the Committee had 126 members.</p>	<p>The Committee collects, conducts and disseminates research/evidence to support member states in their work to improve Food Security.</p>
<p><b>Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) Movement</b></p> <p>The SUN Movement aims to support all nutrition stakeholders to help them create an enabling environment for nutrition, share best practices across countries/regions, align around costed country plans, and increase resources allocated to coherent aligned approaches designed to scale up nutrition. The SUN Movement is open to all countries and their stakeholders. At the end of 2015, the Movement had 56 member countries.</p>	<p>The SUN Movement has created Business, Civil Society, UN and Donor networks that are intended to mutually reinforce accountability across nutrition stakeholder groups through transparent reporting and use of data, as well as other practices. SUN holds an annual Global Gathering for its members, as well as numerous in-country and virtual meetings, to drive these transparency and accountability efforts.</p>
<p><b>United Nations Standing Committee on Nutrition (UNSCN)</b></p> <p>The SCN serves as a platform to improve cooperation among UN agencies and partner organizations (at all levels) engaged in nutrition-related work. The SCN's membership comprises UN agencies and other UN platforms.</p>	<p>The UNSCN works with its members to harmonize policies and strengthen the coherence and impact of nutrition work through better cooperation and coordination across the UN nutrition community.</p>
<p><b>UN REACH</b></p> <p>A partnership of the WFP, UNICEF, FAO, IFAD and WHO. Originally, the partnership was intended to strengthen UN efforts towards ending poverty and hunger by 2015 (MDG1). However, as momentum has grown behind Nutrition, and reflecting the creation of the SUN Movement, REACH has expanded its focus and action plans to include a stronger emphasis on nutrition issues. The Partnership currently has operations in 12 countries.</p>	<p>The Partnership works to assist governments of countries with a high burden of child and maternal undernutrition to accelerate the scale-up of food and nutrition actions.</p>

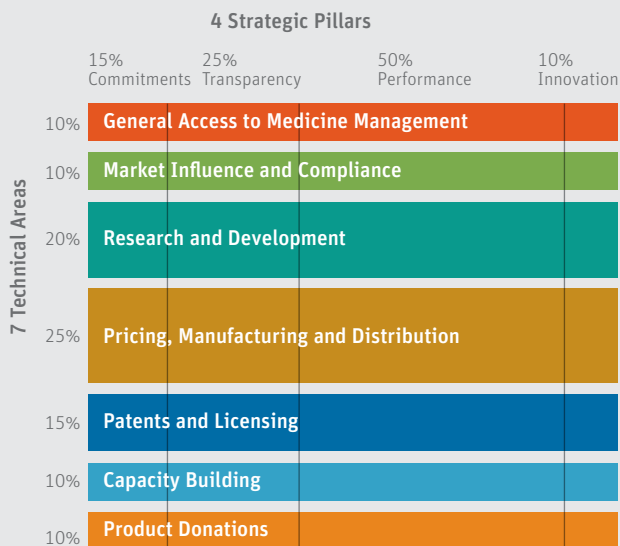
(2) consider creating a multi-sector nutrition scorecard. The Government of Tanzania has embarked on such an endeavor. This can serve as a model for other governments to follow, and can catalyze regional action.

2) The **Access to Medicine Index (ATMI)** is similar to the ATNI (Table 2) in that it seeks to capture private-sector contributions to a key indicator for improved global public health: access to medicine.<sup>18</sup>

Published every two years since 2008, the ATMI is an independent ranking of the top 20 research-based pharmaceutical companies, based on their efforts to improve access to medicine for people living in developing countries. The framework is constructed around seven technical areas including pricing, intel-

lectual property, and public policy, and is examined through the lens of four pillars: commitment, transparency, performance and innovation (see Figure 1). The ATMI is credited with improving private-sector engagement in health, and significantly increasing access to medicines for low-income and other vulnerable populations around the world.

The index is regarded as one of the most robust accountability mechanisms in global public health for the Health Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). In 2013, the MDGs Gap Task Force included ATMI results in its report because it recognized that it was "important to monitor and evaluate what pharmaceutical companies themselves, as the producers and suppliers of medicines, [were] doing to increase access to their products."

**FIGURE 1:** ATMI Methodological Framework.

**Evolution of the framework:** For the 2016 Index, the weighting of the Performance pillar has increased to 50%. For the previous two Indices, its weighting remained static at 40%.

From Access to Medicine Index, 2012

To strengthen its alignment and ability to drive action, the ATMI will be updated to track company progress against specific SDGs, including capacity building (SDG 9), participatory processes (SDG 16), and multi-stakeholder partnerships (SDG 17), in addition to direct action on improving health (SDG 3).

In addition, the ATMI is a good example of a mechanism that has catalyzed further action beyond simply serving as a tool to track commitments. For example, the results of the index are covered by top media outlets, such as the Financial Times and New York Times, whose coverage influences the global reputations of the pharmaceutical companies and, in turn, helps drive their desire to improve their ranking. The result has been to induce a positive competitive environment that encourages a corporate race to the top of the rankings. Also, the index helps employee engagement and professional development within companies by facilitating the engagement of internal specialists with senior managers and other departments within and across organizations. After the publication of each Index, the Access to Medicine Foundation engages with pharmaceutical companies to explain their scores and the recommendations included in the report. During these conversations, companies confirm that this index is an important tool for raising the awareness of access-to-medicine issues across business units. Many of these tactics could be adopted by nutrition leaders.

3) The **Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS)** – a set of commitments that humanitarian organizations should voluntarily meet in order to improve the quality and effectiveness of their assistance.<sup>19</sup> Today, an estimated 23% of the world's poorest families live in fragile states and conflict regions. Pregnant women and young children living in these areas are especially vulnerable to poor nutrition and death from preventable causes. At the New York launch of the 2015 GNR, International Rescue Committee CEO David Miliband made a forceful plea for better partnership and collaboration across the humanitarian and global development community.<sup>20</sup> Launched in late 2014, the new standards aim to further strengthen the focus on accountability in humanitarian assistance in terms of budget transparency and on consulting with communities.

The CHS presents an opportunity for stakeholders in the nutrition space to better partner with actors from the humanitarian space and other sectors to strengthen standards for supporting nutrition in health as well as in emergencies. For example, refining the protocols for delivering emergency supplementary feeding programs, as well as integrating nutrition programming (and financing) between emergency and development contexts would allow for better coverage of key nutrition interventions and more flexible responses, including the continuation of nutrition programs in the post-emergency period. The GNR notes that donors could be asked to report on any such financing activity in future reports.

### New ways of working together

The nutrition community is transitioning from the MDG era to a post-2015 development agenda that is packed with ambitious global goals, including the Nutrition for Growth targets for 2020, the World Health Assembly targets for 2025, and the Sustainable Development Goals for 2030.

Transparency and accountability are crucial to building and sustaining the partnerships necessary to achieve the post-MDG era targets. Therefore, efforts must be made across the board to acknowledge the interests of *all* stakeholder groups – private sector, civil society, government and donor organizations – and in turn, the employment of approaches and tools that have been developed by the health sector and which help drive accountability in business, as well as in government, civil society and donor organizations.

We need leaders such as Ertharin Cousin of the World Food Programme, Margaret Chan of the World Health Organization, and Gerda Verburg of the Committee on World Food Security (CFS) and her successor, Hassan Gornass, to use their convening power to bring all stakeholders to the table and demand accountability and transparency from all parties. The challenges are enormous, and therefore we need to break away from “business as usual.” We need innovative, multi-stakeholder partner-

ship models, and we need leaders in nutrition to truly seek these models out. For example, in the final phase of drafting the WHO Framework for Engagement with Non-State Actors, nutrition leaders have an opportunity to break away from “business as usual” and lead the way towards improving transparency, accountability and trust in this new development era.<sup>21</sup> This opportunity should not be missed.

Nutrition affects all of us: everyone should be at the table.

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