An Accountability Framework for the Generation Equality Forum

Report from stakeholder consultations

October 14, 2021

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Summary

In September 2021, UN Women held 13 consultations as part of a listening tour with different stakeholders in the Generation Equality Forum process, including governments (3), civil society (3), youth (2), international organizations (2), foundations (1), the private sector (1) and adolescent girls (1). The purpose of these consultations was to create the opportunity for leaders from each sector to share their perspectives on priorities for the accountability framework; provide feedback on the elements; unpack stakeholders' roles and responsibilities; and increase our understanding of barriers and enablers for accountability. The foundations, civil society, youth, and adolescent girl consultation agendas were actively co-designed with representatives of each group, though key elements for discussion remained similar throughout.

We conducted these consultations as a single-sector dialogues in response to expressed need from partners to ensure all voices were heard in the process. We also wanted to encourage a space for peer consideration of specific factors influencing their role in accountability, such as barriers or constraints that governments and international organizations face, or enabling conditions unique to the private sector or youth.

The consultations are an initial step in the design of the accountability framework for the Generation Equality Forum. Over the coming months we will hold additional multi-stakeholder consultations to design and seek agreement on methodologies and tools for ensuring accountability for commitments, progress towards blueprint targets, and process and collecting stories of change.

Throughout the consultations there were some key areas of agreement:

- Accountability is critical to maintain and build on the momentum of the Generation Equality Forum; demonstrate that this model of multi-sector collaboration and collective action can accelerate progress towards gender equality; and ensure that we are making tangible changes in the lives of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

- The framework needs to be simple, accessible, understandable, and clear, but it also needs to be nuanced enough to be able to demonstrate that our work is driving change or identify where we are facing roadblocks or challenges.

- It needs to avoid duplication of existing reporting or accountability mechanisms and be targeted toward demonstrating the impact of the work of the Generation Equality Forum, rather than trying to be too broad or cover too many things. To the extent that there are other mechanisms/organizations reporting on certain things (like funding flows), we should collaborate and resource them to incorporate monitoring on the specific impact of the Generation Equality Forum.

- The framework needs to be focused on learning. It had to include more than just reporting against commitments but provide opportunities for sharing lessons and discussing what is and is not working at various levels, so that we can make changes as needed.

- It also needs to create opportunities for localization and regional-level conversation but not impose procedures or structures that would be too burdensome or would jeopardize the safety of women human rights defenders or organizations in hostile contexts. UN Women country and regional offices need to be engaged and actively support this work.

- It should build on lessons learned from other accountability mechanisms and processes.

[W]e've all been in this situation where accountability has felt like . . . we're just doing it to tick a box, or it's more work, it's not actually measuring anything that's meaningful or that makes any actual change. And so, I just want to put into the conversation, we really need to be careful about not making the mistakes that we've made in the past around that and keeping it simple and really, really focused and having it be as much about learning and reflection as it is about impact. – Civil society participant

We need to build in opportunities to learn into this accountability framework - how do we not just tick the box that we are meeting commitments, but how do we draw out the innovative examples and learn from each other to increase our impact? – Government participant

Principles and priorities

There was general endorsement of applying the Generation Equality Forum principles of feminist leadership, transformation, and intersectionality to the accountability framework, although some concern about how to operationalize them. Stakeholders across the board pressed for the creation of definitions for each of these and how they apply to accountability. In addition, stakeholders emphasized other principles and priorities for the approach to the framework:

Transparency: All stakeholders emphasized the importance of transparency. In practice this meant that all commitments and self-reporting on implementation of those commitments is publicly available and presented in a way that is accessible, usable, and understandable; and that expectations on reporting are clear, accessible, and understandable.

Diversity and inclusion: Some stakeholders mentioned that intersectionality did not simply mean diversion and inclusion and that the two needed to be differentiated. There needed to be specific strategies to ensure diversity and inclusion across several areas, including by looking at language accessibility, being responsive to different time zones, accessibility for people with disabilities, capacity building and other strategies that might be needed to meaningfully include grassroots, youth, and adolescent girl-led organizations.

Decolonization: Youth stressed the importance of bringing in a decolonial lens to the work of accountability, which means examining, unpacking, and reshaping power dynamics particularly those that are linked to resource flows and decision-making about them; and ensuring leadership and participation from diverse groups from the Global South.

Responsibility: Stakeholders emphasized that all had specific responsibilities within an accountability framework, but that there were different levels and layers of responsibility that needed to be clearly defined. The responsibilities of Action Coalition leaders, commitment makers, and UN Women, and different stakeholders at the table, need to be clearly defined.

Impact: The purpose of the accountability framework—to drive change, impact, achieve measurable results—needs to drive its design. We need to be able to demonstrate the work is leading to changes in the lives of women, girls, and gender-diverse people. And we need to be able to clearly articulate what outcomes we are trying to achieve.

Clarity: Stakeholders need to understand what we are measuring, for what purpose and what the expectations of their participation are. It needs to be easy to communicate and understandable to people outside of the immediate process.

Simplicity: Stakeholders warned about the risks of trying to do too much with the framework and pointed to various risks in designing a framework that was overly complex and/or burdensome. Across the board, they emphasized the importance of keeping it simple.

Additive and non-duplicative: All stakeholders mentioned that they faced extensive reporting burdens, reporting fatigue, or were doing their own monitoring on different elements of the AC blueprints. They stressed the importance of ensuring that the framework does not duplicate existing reporting but is specific and additive. They also emphasized that the framework should build from and draw on existing mechanisms/reports.

Learning: All stakeholders wanted a framework that enabled opportunities for reflection and learning, including through peer-to-peer learning and mentorship.

Feminist practice: Some participants from government, civil society and others recommended using feminist monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning practices and methodologies that recognize that change is not linear; use mixed methodologies that assess contributions to progress over time rather than attributions; take note of negative impacts, resistance, reactions, and unexpected outcomes as well as the positive; and build in opportunities for learning throughout the process.

Trust: Many stakeholders emphasized that the accountability framework needs to be built on the idea of trust and mutual accountability.

Elements of an Accountability Framework

We need to be able to lean in to this voluntary, transparent road we are on. Everyone needs to be accountable to everyone else - we want to do this together - we will be accountable to each other. – Government participant

What we're calling for when we call for accountability is effective communication: that we should know what is being done for us as adolescent girls and we should understand what the policymakers have in mind when they implement certain policies for the benefit of adolescent girls. So, I think that's it: effective communication and transparency. – Adolescent girl participant

Accountability for Commitments

There was widespread agreement across stakeholders that all commitment makers should report on the implementation of their commitments. They recommended a process that:
- Sets out clear expectations of commitment makers and allows them to plan.

- Is on a regular schedule.
- Is simple and not overly burdensome.
- Is not duplicative.
- Allows the tracking of progress towards implementation of commitments over time; and
- Is not just an exercise in ticking the box but opens the door for meaningful reflection and learning about what is and is not working.

As a first step, many emphasized that the **commitments themselves needed to be published in a way that is transparent, clear, and understandable**. Some civil society participants recommended working with commitment makers to **clarify their commitments** and ensure that they were **measurable over time**; although there was not agreement about whether that should be done for all commitment makers or just a subset. Some stakeholders talked about the value of a **data portal** that was searchable and customizable and that included both **commitments and self-reports of progress** against them over time. Such a portal would allow for **independent analysis by other actors** and increase **transparency** and **trust**. Multiple stakeholders emphasized the importance of **making the commitments and progress reports accessible** to people with disabilities and in multiple languages—not just English, Spanish, and French.

Most agreed that reporting should happen on **an annual basis** and accompanied by a short **report** that provides some **over-arching analysis of trends, opportunities, and challenges**. Some, particularly participants from youth and civil society, emphasized that reporting on some commitments—like tracking the funding and whether the $40 billion in commitments was reaching communities—was more important than others.

Participants across the board emphasized the importance of creating spaces for learning and reflection on the implementation of commitments, either at the AC level or in other forums. In one civil society consultation, a participant recommended that the reporting on commitments be accompanied by an **annual convening of AC leaders and commitment makers** (potentially on the margins of the Commission on the Status of Women) to discuss challenges and opportunities that are arising through the implementation of commitments and create space for learning and deeper collaboration. Some emphasized that there should be specific analysis and space created for discussions about **youth- and adolescent girl-focused commitments** as well as the impact of commitments on adolescents and young people. Many stakeholders emphasized the need to make use of forums that already exist to have discussions about accountability and action, rather than creating new ones, like the Commission on the Status of Women, High Level Political Forum, or others.

Collective commitments

Collective commitments are meant to be multistakeholder, gathered under a common goal. They give an impression that the impact will be amplified. It will be worthwhile to track and follow what the impact will be. – AC technical lead

There was some discussion in various consultations about whether collective commitments should be monitored or reported on in a different way. Collective commitments that were developed by Action Coalition leaders are more closely tied to the implementation of the Action Coalition Blueprints, and most of them model the kind of multi-stakeholder engagement and partnership that has been a defining feature of the Generation Equality Forum.

Most stakeholders agreed that collective commitments warranted specific attention, but there was not agreement about how to do this. Some questioned whether they could report on collective commitments in a way that was different to their individual commitments – noting that in some cases collective commitments did not necessarily envisage joint action or learning. In other cases, like on the Global Alliance for Sustainable Feminist Movements, specific structures or processes are being established to facilitate joint action and learning. Others thought that collective commitments could be a good tool for organizing/framing discussions at the Action Coalition level. This warrants further exploration.

What happens if commitments aren't met?

I think we have to also acknowledge the environment that we're working in and the various constraints that enable or facilitate participation by whom, by which groups, and also that there are costs to some organizations when they get things wrong, right? And how do we work within that? Because accountability, if it's true accountability, will say when targets have not been met and when commitments have not been made, and those are really politically difficult things to do, but I think that's what the movement is asking of us in this time, that we be transparent in that way. – Civil society participant

In some consultations, the question was raised: what happens if commitment makers do not fulfill their commitments? Some, including from civil society and international organizations, mentioned that accountability is meaningless if there are no consequences, opportunity for redress or remedies where commitment makers are falling short, or where commitments that are implemented have unintended negative consequences on women, girls, young people, and gender-diverse people.

Some noted that different stakeholders have differing levels of responsibility and capacity and that the same expectations cannot necessarily be held for all. Governments, for example, because of their **role as duty bearers have greater responsibility** for fulfilling human rights and for meeting commitments to gender equality than other stakeholders. Yet governments change and elections might result in significant shifts in their prioritization of gender equality and the fulfillment of the commitments of previous governments. And governments, particularly in the global south, may also face constraints in capacity and resources or face crises that impact their ability to deliver.

Others, like civil society organizations, youth and adolescent-girl led groups, may face significant barriers to following through with their commitments due to a lack of capacity, constrained legal and policy environments, closing space for civil society, attacks by opposition, and/or limited financial and human resources. International organization and foundation representatives pointed to fears of loss of funding or other punishment for civil society and youth-led organizations that admitted challenges. Most agreed that **allowing space for honest conversation and discussion of challenges and barriers** of various types was important and could lead to meaningful changes in the field.

Others emphasized the importance of a framework that was not punitive, but that supported commitment makers to step up where they were falling short. In youth and civil society consultations, participants noted that **incentives**—like prizes or other forms of recognition like spotlighting good practice—could be powerful tools to encourage people to meet their commitments. Some civil society

groups mentioned tools like a **grading system** could measure progress towards meeting commitments for various actors, noting that consequences of not meeting commitments would be reflected in grades.

From Global to Regional to Local

Ensure accountability doesn't just stop with national level but goes down truly to the community-level/local level. – Civil society participant

The importance of **localizing accountability and ensuring that communities have a stake in accountability** was emphasized by different stakeholders. Many stakeholders recommend that opportunities for learning and reflection should be established at the **regional level**—perhaps on the margins of regional preparatory meetings for the CSW or other gender-focused processes—and at the **national level**.

Many stakeholders cautioned that the efforts to **localize accountability** should be meaningful, not overly burdensome, and should not require the establishment of new structures or processes.

Some from civil society and youth cautioned that adequate thought needed to be given to the **protection of women and youth human rights and environmental defenders**, especially in hostile contexts or where meaningful collaboration with governments was not possible.

Others questioned what this would look like in countries where governments had not stepped up to make commitments. Could there still be opportunities for collaboration and learning among other stakeholders that had made commitments?

Most emphasized that **UN women country and regional offices** could play a helpful role in facilitating and supporting localization of the agenda.

Accountability for impact

Progress towards AC Blueprint Targets
All stakeholders felt that it was important to measure progress towards the targets set in Action Coalition blueprints. However, many of them raised questions, concerns and areas for additional work or thinking.

First, stakeholders identified the need to revisit indicators in the blueprints to ensure:
- clarity about what we are measuring and why.
- coherence across the blueprints in terms of the type and number of indicators; and
- that data exists for each indicator, and if not, that there is a clear and transparent process to make decisions about whether to invest in the development of new indicators, including data collection methodologies and tools.

Some from civil society and international organizations emphasized that we need to not just measure numbers, but **progress towards clearly defined milestones**, such as law and policy changes.

Second, stakeholders identified the need for agreement across the Action Coalitions about how to **operationalize the principle of intersectionality** in efforts to measure progress towards targets and

whether/how to collect disaggregated data on various grounds—including age, race, ethnicity, indigeneity, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability, socioeconomic status, and others.

Third, stakeholders raised the **problem of attribution**. Some targets and indicators, but not all, are closely linked to SDG targets and indicators, or measurements of progress widely used in their respective fields. In addition, many of the strategies and tactics identified in blueprints are not new and while they are intended to accelerate progress in each area, build on well-established bodies of work. How will we be able to demonstrate that the Action Coalitions are in fact making a difference?

Fourth, stakeholders identified the **risk of duplication** in this area. UN Women already has a flagship publication on gender equality and the SDGs. Member states report periodically on their efforts to implement the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Platform for Action, and the SDGs. AWID and OECD monitor funding for gender equality and the extent to which it reaches feminist movements and organizations. Civil society organizations and youth-led organizations are doing monitoring on various aspects of this work. How can we ensure that reporting on progress toward blueprint targets was not duplicative of other work?

Other strategies for ensuring accountability for impact
In addition to measuring progress towards targets and indicators, stakeholders emphasized that there were other tools and processes that could be used to ensure accountability for impact, such as **storytelling**, **case studies, surveys, opportunities for peer learning and collective reflection**, among others.

The value of **independent monitoring of impact** was raised in consultations, including those with civil society, youth, adolescent girls, international organizations, and philanthropies. The question was raised whether the Generation Equality Forum could bolster and support other, independent monitoring efforts, particularly those led by feminist, youth-led and adolescent girl organizations and movements. Could there be support for community scorecards, surveys of feminist organizations, or other tools to measure progress in a number more qualitative and less tangible areas, like narrative or political change? How could independent monitoring mechanisms be used to tell a fuller, unbiased story of the change that the Generation Equality Forum and Action Coalitions are generating at the community level, country level, regional level, and global level?

Some stakeholders also recommended establishing processes that enabled Action Coalition leaders and commitment makers to reflect on whether and how their work was leading to tangible change in the lives of women, girls, and gender-diverse people.

Needs: Capacity and Clarity
All stakeholders mentioned concerns about their **capacity** to do this work, including the capacity of UN Women to lead it. Governments across the board raised concerns about their capacity to collect and report on disaggregated data on several grounds, as well their ability to add an additional layer of reporting onto their already heavy reporting burden. Civil society, youth-led and adolescent girl-led organizations expressed concerns about their limited resources, and the need to invest in capacity development to be able to collect and report on impact.

All stakeholders expressed the need to ensure **clarity about the roles and expectations** of various actors when it came to measuring impact. Some, including the private sector, some stakeholders from civil

society, and governments, cautioned against trying to be too expansive and use this to address all problems in the field. Having a clearly defined, and narrow, focus could be more effective.

Some questions that need to be considered further include:
- How will monitoring of progress toward targets build on/link to reporting from other processes and avoid duplication?
- What would reports on the impact of the GEF address that would be different and additive to the field?
- How could UN Women and the GEF secretariat bolster or support other efforts to measure progress on gender equality?
- What role can independent or third-party monitoring play?

Tracking change in key areas: gender data, impact on adolescent girls, feminist movements and leadership, and funding flows for gender equality

In all consultations we asked how important it was for the GEF to be able to track change in cross-cutting areas, such as the availability and quality of gender data, impact on adolescent girls, feminist movements and leadership, and funding flows for gender equality. While there was general agreement that there should be tracking of specific, cross-cutting issues, what we would be tracking and how those questions were framed warranted further discussion.

Many stakeholders thought it would be important to measure the **impact on feminist and youth-led movements,** building on the evidence that has been generated already about what makes movements effective. Are they autonomous? Are they more capable of building cross-sectoral and multi-sectoral alliances? Are they able to align around a common vision? Do they have the flexible funding needed to reduce competition, increase adaptability, and increase their responsiveness? How are they addressing power imbalances within them and ensuring intersectionality? Are they intergenerational? How are they able to exercise power and influence policy and normative change?

Similarly, instead of funding flows more broadly, was the **funding** committed for the Generation Equality Forum **reaching grassroots, feminist, and youth-led organizations** directly? How was it strengthening movements? Was it of better quality and more responsive to their needs?

In the area of **gender data availability and quality**, how was the Generation Equality Forum specifically contributing to change in this area? By strengthening a focus on data disaggregation? Developing new indicators? Increasing capacity of national statistics offices?

For adolescent girls and youth, how are programs meeting their needs? Are they meaningfully involved in shaping them? Can accountability panels be established to assess progress, identify shortfalls, and attempt to close gaps?

In all cases, clear and transparent metrics for evaluation would be needed at the outset to ensure we could meaningfully track change over time and accurately attribute the impact of the Generation Equality Forum to these changes.

Accountability for the Process

Are we meaningfully supporting young people's leadership, are we redistributing power, are we transforming our practices? – Civil society participant

[W]e're holding ourselves accountable to the process also. The principles require us to think internally on how to adjust our way of working to strengthen our intersectional approaches. Ensuring that we are all transparent, ensuring that the voices and views and leadership of girls, in addition to youth, in all their diversity are also included in an accountability framework and process. – International organization participant

Genuine sharing of power between states, philanthropy, private sector, and COMMUNITIES, to ensure these process leads to measurable and lasting change. – Civil society participant

Of all proposed elements of the framework, this was the one area where there were mixed perceptions about its importance, as well as a lack of understanding about what actors should be held accountable for and how. Despite this, no group wanted to see it go; they instead wanted **greater clarity** about the desired outcomes, expectations of different stakeholders, how they could actively implement processes to drive change within their work, and methodologies for measuring change.

Within the work of the Action Coalitions, many stressed that a **power analysis** would be an important starting point. The analysis would aim to understand who has power, how it is exercised and what can be done to meaningfully redistribute it so that everyone, but particularly marginalized and excluded groups, can shape agendas, and make decisions. In doing so, participants stressed the need to actively take steps to move away from tokenism and ensure that participation of adolescents, youth, and others moves beyond simply ticking the box that they were present, to creating spaces where they can lead.

Other important steps included:
- establishing clear working methods for the Action Coalitions and other governance structures that center the GEF values.
- collectively setting expectations for how stakeholders—including AC leaders, commitment makers, UN Women, and other engaged stakeholders—will engage in the space to foster trust, take into account the perspectives of marginalized and excluded groups, and challenge and change discrepancies in resources and power.
- creating opportunities to learn together and establish practices that foster anti-racism and encourage decolonization of work in the gender equality field, particularly when it comes funding and agenda setting.
- channeling resources to support the active and sustained participation of groups that lack them, such as indigenous and youth-led organizations which often rely on volunteer work, as well as feminist organizations who may have few unrestricted resources to support their engagement; and
- establishing clear and understandable processes for redress and course correction.

In addition to the Action Coalitions, many emphasized that there needed to be accountability for process **in all work related to the Generation Equality Forum**. In one civil society consultation, participants strongly recommended some **accounting for the process so far**. Many expressed the process leading up to the Paris forum was difficult to understand and influence, actively excluded

marginalized groups, and was disempowering. For some, moving forward on developing accountability metrics around transformative processes without such an analysis, would be disingenuous and counterproductive because there would not be a baseline against which to measure change.

Others called for the establishment of **groups to oversee accountability** on various fronts, including process, such as by establishing the Adolescent Girl Advisory Group, a Youth Accountability Panel, and/or just a clear, multi-stakeholder governance structure for the GEF, drawing on lessons learned from other multi-stakeholder bodies.

Some participants, particularly those from the private sector and international organizations, noted that they had made **internal commitments** focused on improving gender equality and transformative processes within their own entities. They noted that they would be prepared to report on progress towards those ends if given a platform and clear guidelines to do so.

Participants emphasized again that when it comes to ensuring accountability for process, **clarity and transparency are key**. Participants to know what is being measured, how often, by who and what expectations of various stakeholders are.

Roles and responsibilities, barriers, and enablers

I also think accountability is not just one way. All stakeholders will be involved with different lenses of looking at it… It's a way we hold each other accountable through the processes and spaces. – Youth participant

In all consultations, we asked participants about their own roles and responsibilities within an accountability framework for the GEF, as well as barriers and enablers. While all stakeholders emphasized that **all stakeholders in the process need to be held** accountable, there were differences in views about the responsibilities of various stakeholders. International organizations, foundations, youth, and civil society for example, noted that **certain groups had greater responsibility than others because of differences in power, resources, and capacities**. Governments had the added responsibility of being **duty bearers and for delivering on human rights**. Foundations, international organizations, civil society, youth, and adolescents noted that they have **dual roles of both pushing for accountability from others, while being accountable themselves** in various ways either as commitment makers, leaders or as stakeholders that have access. They can also **amplify marginalized voices and facilitate the participation and engagement of others** who are not already at the table.

The political leadership may get on the way. We have elections. Priorities can change... Even if we have government commitment now, we don't know in five years. – Government participant

Barriers were similar across stakeholders, including a **lack of funding, resources, and capacity**—these were particularly acute for civil society and youth, many of whom relied on volunteers or did not have funding to sustain their engagement. Almost all stakeholders identified a **lack of clear roles or entry points for engaging** as a barrier, while others pointed to a lack of clarity about processes, end goals, shared definitions, and limited communication. Some of these barriers translated into **difficulty mobilizing stakeholders** and convincing them to come to the table. Others resulted in **systemic exclusion of diverse stakeholders**, particularly people with disabilities, youth, adolescent girls,

marginalized and excluded communities, as well as those who faced language barriers or barriers to participation due to time zones.

A lot of times [girl] leaders are not involved because of age or experience restrictions and limitations. They won't be able to participate in an informed manner in various discussions or even implementing the change. But I feel there has be a capacity building or something that ensures that the information that is passed on from global organizations, the girls are able to fully understand it and hence participate in a more informed manner. – Adolescent girl participant

Civil society and youth pointed to **shrinking civic space and risks to women and youth human rights and environmental defenders** as barriers to participation in accountability, while international organizations noted that geopolitical forces or other changes in the political landscape could undermine accountability.

Some in civil society, international organizations, and foundations noted that the **fear of punishment**, such as a loss of funding because of a lack of impact or ability to show results, could be a major barrier to engaging in honest conversations about what was and was not working. Governments pointed to **elections** and potential changes in political priorities as a reality that they could not escape.

Enablers were also similar across stakeholders. To enable participation in accountability processes, the Generation Equality Forum Secretariat needs to build in **adequate time for consultation and discussion**, as well as **advance notice for meetings**, consideration of **different time zones**, support for **interpretation** and **accessibility for people with disabilities**. **Clarity around roles, responsibilities, processes, and desired outcomes** is critical, while ensuring **space for co-creation** of these elements. **Funding and capacity development** are also high priorities, particularly for civil society, youth, and adolescents, but also for governments in the Global South and international organizations. The creation of **spaces for learning and collaboration**—including peer learning, cross-learning, coalition building and organizing, bidirectional mentoring—were identified as key enablers across stakeholders at all levels.

Specific roles, responsibilities, and barriers are attached as annex 1.

Recommendations

Stakeholders are demanding an accountability framework that is simple, understandable, and easy to communicate, with clear expectations. It must also open the door for reflection, learning, and the opportunity to make strategic shifts in strategies and tactics at multiple levels, from the global to the regional and local. They want to know that commitments are being met and how those commitments are leading to advances for women, girls, and gender-diverse people. They also want to ensure that the framework and the Generation Equality Forum's methods of work are truly feminist in nature, prioritize intersectionality and the rebalancing of power, and contribute to transformative changes in the ways that the sector is working including in funding flows, support for movements, and the leadership of young people, adolescents, and feminists in all their diversity.

The recommendations below were drawn from the consultations and various ideas that emerged throughout. However, they should be viewed as preliminary and will need to be further developed in collaboration with various partners in this process. One thing that is clear, is that stakeholders want a

framework that speaks to all elements of the Generation Equality Forum, and not just the Action Coalitions.

On Accountability for Commitments

- Create a public, searchable database for commitments, that allows commitment makers to upload reports and that can be used to track progress over time. Invest in clarifying commitments to make sure they are understandable and measurable.

- Annual reporting of progress toward implementing commitments should be simple with clear guidance about how to answer questions and open the door for reflection and learning. Commitment makers could be asked three questions:
  a. what concrete actions have you taken towards implementing commitments? (With appropriate guidance on reporting on funding flows, project or program implementation, advocacy, law/policy change, etc.)
  b. What have been some of the biggest challenges and what have you learned from them?
  c. What are your biggest accomplishments?

  Questions would need to be refined through consultation, and may need to be more specific, but there is a clear need for simplicity, non-duplication, and learning.

- Perform additional analysis on the implementation of collective commitments, as they are most closely tied to the achievement of the Blueprints. Action Coalitions could define a body of work around this, or other areas such as specific program areas, to assess implementation progress and challenges and create communities of practice.

- Consider an annual report on the implementation of commitments, gleaning information about trends, areas from self-reports.

- Establish Forums where stakeholders can reflect on progress implementing commitments both within and across action coalitions, such as on the margins of the CSW. Use regional-level preparatory meetings for the CSW or other regional-level processes, and create spaces at the country level for accountability, reflection, and joint learning.

- Consider incentives, scorecards or other tools to encourage self-reporting.

On Accountability for Impact

Progress toward Blueprint targets
- Work within and across Action Coalitions to ensure coherence at the indicator level, based on the analysis from UN Women's Research and Data team.

- Create a process to generate consensus across Action Coalitions about an ideal number of indicators per target and where data does not exist, create a process to enable strategic decision-making about whether and how to fill data gaps.

- Create a process that will enable a strategic decision across action coalitions about intersectionality and data disaggregation to ensure a cross-cutting approach to these issues.

- Agree on cadence of reporting (biannually?) on progress toward targets and identify responsibilities for producing such reports; identify ways to draw on data from other accountability mechanisms, such as reports submitted to the HLPF, CEDAW, as well as independent monitoring by civil society.

Other measures of impact
- Map other accountability mechanisms for gender equality and identify areas of overlap and complementarity, to minimize duplication.

- Support independent monitoring by civil society, youth, and other actors of the GEF process and give it space on the GEF website to increase transparency, trust, and accountability.

- Establish baselines for monitoring impact of the GEF on data availability, adolescent girls, and feminist movements, as well as funding flows for gender equality and the extent to which they are reaching frontline organizations and feminist movements. To the extent that this work is being done by independent actors, support it and ensure that they have resources to expand this work to account for the impact of the GEF specifically.

- Use a variety of tools, including case studies, surveys, storytelling, to capture impacts beyond numbers.

On Accountability for Process

- Establish a process within each AC to conduct a power analysis and agree working methods, including clear agreements about how decisions will be made, how they will address discrepancies in power and ensure that those sitting in the table are supported to be able to engage equally.

- Develop strategies to address gaps in capacity and resource the participation of youth, civil society, and others to participate effectively within the Action Coalitions and in accountability processes.

- Support a process of self-reflection within Action Coalitions on an ongoing basis, perhaps every six months, that allows for discussion and learning about what is/is not working well in their process and what needs to change.

- Share reflections of lessons learned with the broader public, perhaps on an annual basis at the same time as reporting on commitments.

- Consider a clear and transparent process to develop a governance structure for the GEF, that ensures meaningful representation and participation of adolescent girls, youth, and other marginalized and excluded groups.

- Consider developing methodologies for assessing process in the implementation of external and internal commitments.

Annex 1: Roles, responsibilities, barriers, and enablers for different stakeholders

The following table summarizes key roles, responsibilities, barriers, and enablers as identified by each group.

Governments		
Roles and responsibilities	**Barriers**	**Enablers**
• Being accountable to commitments and to participating actively in the process • Involving CSOs in reporting and accountability processes at the country level • Engaging other parts of government to support implementation of commitments and ensure continuity • Connecting local action with regional and global impact, including through collective commitments • Bringing in marginalized and excluded groups and reaching out beyond those already engaged, particularly at the country level • Advocating with other governments to join the process and make commitments	• Lack of capacity to measure the impact of our actions • Existing reporting burdens • Duplicative and overly burdensome processes/reporting • Lack of clarity about the roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders, such as AC leaders, UN Women, etc. • Access to disaggregated data • Lack of baselines against which to measure progress in some areas • Lack of knowledge about commitments made and their contribution to AC blueprints • Political barriers/changes within governments	• Alignment with existing priorities, reporting frameworks and accountability mechanisms • Strong networks with civil society and other partners at the national level to align on indicators, address obstacles, ensure coordination on implementation of programs, and increase space for accountability • Leveraging UN Women offices at the country level to support in capacity building and addressing country-level constraints • A framework that is simple, accessible, and digestible and that is motivating, inspires action • Availability of public information in multiple languages • Transparency

Civil Society		
Roles and responsibilities	**Barriers**	**Enablers**
• Being accountable to communities they serve • Being transparent and accountable to our own commitments, no matter the size of the organization • Representing the hopes and dreams of our community • Holding governments, foundations, and the private sector accountable for implementing their commitments in an inclusive, transformational way • Being open to feedback, learning and honest, challenging discussions on our own work and actions • Facilitating access of communities and pushing for a context where we don't have to fight for accessibility and diversity • Bringing information to constituencies and ensuring that their voices get captured at every level of the process • Building capacities of adolescents, youth, marginalized and grassroots groups to engage • Working to defragment our own spaces • Lifting each other up, bring others along, and enhance capacity across the movement • Capturing stories • Measuring funding flows for feminist movements and the changes that feminist movements are seeing on the ground	• Lack of power and power imbalances • Shrinking civil society space and threats to safety, health, and well-being • Time, especially in small organizations • Staffing • Funding – including project funding that doesn't allow flexibility or long-term planning • Language barriers • Performance requirements that hinder getting work done • Unequal access due to a lack of responsiveness to different time zones • Spaces that are tokenistic, rather than inclusive • Reporting fatigue • Digital gaps • Short timeframes • Capacity gaps	• Bidirectional mentorship (large to small, youth to older, and vice versa) • Core funds and general operating support for feminist organizations • Providing access to timely information • Cross-learning • Feminist coalitions • Creating communities of practice, rallying around similar commitments • Creating mechanisms for joint accountability between organizations of different sizes/expertise • Allowing sufficient time to put accountability mechanisms in place • Leveraging the power of those who have it (such as human rights mechanisms) to push for accountability of other stakeholders

Philanthropies		
Roles and responsibilities	**Barriers**	**Enablers**
• Being accountable and holding others to account • Amplifying voices and facilitating resources and access for those who are not at the table • Funding more and better to shift power to grassroots, women-led organizations • Building partners' capacity to measure impact • Pushing for bolder initiatives • Supporting partners to share learnings and best practices and sharing our own learnings too • Being transparent about progress towards own commitments and holding ourselves accountable • Bringing more people to the table • Leveraging leadership voice to advance collective goals • Providing support to measure impact, recognizing that it takes time and funding • Advocating with donor governments to come into the process as commitment makers and funders • Advocating internally • Understanding the collective impact of philanthropies in the process	• Lack of a governance structure for the GEF makes it difficult to explain to partners • Opaque processes, targets, and roles • Lack of understanding of how individual goals translate into overarching goals • Complexity of managing multi-stakeholder initiatives, while also managing complexities within philanthropies • Questions about the legitimacy and impact of global initiatives mean that investing time, energy, and resources into it can be difficult • Questions about the role of civil society and youth • Not having a shared understanding of accountability • No clear, basic minimums lead to multiple partners and opaqueness about the end goals • Managing processes online is difficult • Cocreating from scratch is hard • Lack of systemized accountability processes within foundations	• Ensuring more frequent, consistent, and clear communication to partners • Addressing power imbalances • Establishing a framework that is clear, understandable, and accessible • Developing guidance for translating individual entity commitments into measured progress for the overarching targets in the Global Acceleration Plan • Developing different tools for measuring impact over time • Ensuring transparency - who will be funding the process, how much, what voice will those people have and how do you track this and ensure information • Defining clear roles and responsibilities • Engaging data experts from philanthropies to allow the deepening of the process • Setting up regular mechanisms to sustain the channels of communication and dialogue at the highest level (e.g., regular communication between UN Women ED and foundation presidents). • Peer learning between foundations to share strategies and challenges • Seeing other philanthropies commit funding to this area, demonstration effect, peer pressure and effect

		• Trust fund mechanism or other form of resourcing mechanism for grantees (e.g., to women's organizations) • Creating a GEF gender index for foundations • Initiatives for supporting grantees around strategic planning and building • More education and advocacy on the important role that multilateralism plays in achieving gender equality; not all foundations are in support of the UN system • Leveraging cross-cutting themes with gender and other thematic areas of the ACs, but insufficient alone as gender mainstreaming • Philanthropic collaboratives (e.g., climate change)
Private Sector		
Roles and responsibilities	**Barriers**	**Enablers**
• Meeting commitments • Measuring data internally for gender shifts • Funding external projects where commitments to do so exist • Being aware of the ratings/expectations and matching those standards	• Discrepancies in approaches to accountability and how to align • Different types of commitments – internal, external, and collective and the challenge of specific monitoring and accountability about each • Companies have their own methodologies for data collection; need to reconcile differences. • Action coalition leadership • Lack of clarity about what we are being measured against and how to shape them	• Simplicity • Clear metrics • Clear guidance for reporting on commitments • Alignment on metrics for reporting on internal shifts, especially if they are being rated against them • Clarity about the impact we are trying to make and our roles within that • Having the right people sit around the table • Knowing who else in the sector/field is doing it already and benchmarking

International organizations		
Roles and responsibilities	**Barriers**	**Enablers**
• Helping design specific indicators to measure targets • Monitoring implementation of specific targets/indicators • Supporting the work of Action Coalitions • Feeding blueprints into the work of our organizations more broadly • Being accountable for commitments made and ensuring buy-in at the highest levels of organizations • Resourcing accountability processes, especially for grassroots organizations • Ensuring the voices of girls and other stakeholders that are not always at the table are included throughout the process – developing specific engagement/ methodologies to bring those views to the table. • Working to integrate intersectional feminist principles into our own ways of working	• Lack of funding • Lack of buy in from partners • Broader geopolitical or other changes in the world • Lack of support or remuneration for the time that women's organizations are putting into these processes	• Bringing together reporting from different entities and processes rather than creating something new • Making GEF a central point for reporting on gender equality to minimize duplication • Partnering with other organizations to help fill gender data gaps • More conscious trust building mechanisms • Independence • Clear roles and responsibilities, as early as possible • Clear governance mechanisms • Transparency in how we are developing and implementing the framework • Considering the timing of the processes, languages, and accessibility to ensure people can participate effectively

Youth		
Roles and responsibilities	**Barriers**	**Enablers**
• Networking and bringing more youth into these spaces • Broadening the base of the GEF • Bringing in more commitments including from young people • Co-creating and making decisions alongside others • Playing advisory roles • Speaking up for the issues/groups that are not being addressed adequately • Holding others accountable • Engaging in high level decision-making spaces and influencing decision-makers and authorities • Implementing commitments • Acting as commitments watchdogs • Engaging in intergenerational dialogue • Peer learning • Collaborating with other feminist and youth organizations	• Funding • Capacity • Lack of clear roles for national gender youth activists, the youth task force, and young people more broadly in governance and accountability processes • Lack of support from UN systems at the regional and local levels • Lack of information or clarity on processes	• Working collectively through coalitions and movements • Recognizing the power youth have and formalizing it • Effective communications strategies and outreach to communities and people on the ground • Resources • Representative spaces to communicate youth priorities • Designated youth focal points • Support from UN Women and other UN bodies to facilitate young people's leadership and access to power • Intergenerational dialogue • Peer learning • Building the capacity and raising the awareness of young people on how to demand their rights • Creating platforms for communication between civil society organizations, including youth organizations, within and between countries and regions • Connections to advocacy at the regional and global levels • Establishing clear platforms, processes and roles and responsibilities for youth leadership and engagement • Paying young people for their labor and work on accountability

		• Ensuring accessibility in terms of time zones, languages, and accommodations for people with disabilities • Capacity building for other stakeholders on how to create spaces where youth can lead • Mechanisms to protect women and youth human rights and environmental defenders

Adolescent girls		
Roles and responsibilities	**Barriers**	**Enablers**
• Advising on girls' priorities across action coalitions • Communicating with girls about their roles as commitment makers • Implementers of change • Tracking the funding going to girl-led organizations • Engaging in dialogue with other stakeholders • Acting as decision-makers at all levels • Being the start: initiating conversations to bring girls together to inspire confidence that we can drive change • Establishing learning networks with each other • Advocating with national and local governments and other decision-makers who can implement changes that are out of our hands • Acting as girl rapporteurs and monitors to assess progress for adolescent girls • Taking the work down to the ground and making it relevant	• Lack of information and clear communication • Perception that girls are there to advise on but not make decisions • Lack of resources and funding • Lack of specific targets and strategies on adolescent girls • Lack of clear spaces and opportunities for girls' engagement	• Specific adolescent girl group for the accountability framework to give advice and participate in decision-making, like the adolescent girls' advisory council • Funding and resources to grassroots girls' organizations • Compensating girls for their time • Systemic integration of girls in Generation Equality Forum processes • Clear lines of communication with Action Coalitions • Capacity building to ensure girl leaders are fully equipped to participate in an informed manner • Supporting networking and learning between adolescent girls • Town halls to have open conversations with adolescent girl leaders on an ongoing basis • Investments in girls' education

• Challenging power dynamics		• Support for girls' engagement in regional frameworks • Access to technology