

Partnership for Maternal, Newborn and Child Health (PMNCH)
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International Budget Partnership (IBP)
Enforcing Accountability through Budget Transparency and Citizen Participation in
the Budget Process

- The Open Budget Survey 2010 and the findings of the “Ask Your Government Campaign” prove that, despite some important achievements, access to budget information remains a huge challenge at the global level. In many countries around the world, chiefly developing and low-income countries, key budget information is either not produced, not sufficiently disaggregated, not made available to the public (including key players for accountability such as Parliamentarians), or when produced it is not always comprehensible.
- Budget transparency and accountability are critical to any effort that seeks to measure the impact of development commitments, particularly when these commitments refer to specific policies, increased budgetary allocations, and/or improved budgetary executions, such as those pledged by 25 governments around the world to advance maternal and child health.
- Commitment and outcome monitoring efforts need to fully incorporate budget-tracking mechanisms and strategies across all the phases of national budgetary processes from when budgets are planned to the moment when they are spent. Tracking allocations and expenditures is essential in making sure that scarce resources are used to the best extent possible, in the most efficient and effective way.
- Civil society budget monitoring work at the national and sub-national levels needs to be incorporated and supported as a key tool to monitor MNCH commitments. Civil society budget work provides evidence around improvements on access to information and on the actual use of resources on the ground. It provides evidence to assess whether governments are taking the steps to move in the right direction.
- For this reason, civil society budget monitoring has to be a component of the accountability agenda that will form part of the efforts to translate the Global Strategy on MNCH into concrete actions. It needs to be a component of the strategy to monitor individual country pledges. Looking at the money that effectively goes into realizing these pledges has to be a *sine qua none* for the maternal health agenda during the next five years.

- In order for budget monitoring mechanisms to succeed, the production and disclosure of detailed budget information must be an essential component of our advocacy.
- Governments need to take one further step in their commitments by making a pledge to produce and make available, in an accessible, useful and timely way, budget information pertaining to their maternal and health plans and actions. Some governments are already moving in this direction by producing citizen's budgets. Mali, Mexico and Guatemala are a good example of this.
- The UN and other international organizations and partnerships can:
 - Provide technical and financial support to governments to improve their health and budget information systems.
 - Engage and support civil society around the world to effectively monitor governments' maternal and child health pledges. This kind of monitoring cannot take place solely at the international level. It is ultimately the people of any given country who have to play a core role in holding their governments to account.
- International institutions overseeing and monitoring development commitments should require budget information in their reporting requirements when this is not already the case.
- Citizens need to take a more proactive role to participate in accountability. Only through active citizen participation will public spending be made efficient and transparent.
- This is our opportunity to add a very concrete and irrefutable tool to the maternal and child health accountability agenda. More money is a necessary but not a sufficient condition to improve the lives of women and children around the world. Improved investment also means resources better spent, and for this budget transparency and citizen participation are essential