



12 Accountability Commitments

Preamble

Our promise

By signing up to these 12 Accountability Commitments, we as Members of Accountable Now seek to establish a close link with our stakeholders, continuously improve our performance and enhance our individual and collective contribution to improve peoples' lives and the environment.

Who we are

We are independent international civil society organisations (CSOs), working to advance human rights; promote equitable and sustainable development and wellbeing; protect the environment; coordinate humanitarian response and provide other public goods. In this endeavour we seek to complement, rather than replace, other actors working towards the same objectives. We are united in our commitment to accountability, as laid out in the 12 Accountability Commitments below.

Our stakeholders

Our first responsibility is to achieve our stated mission effectively, consistent to our values. In this, we are accountable to our stakeholders - in particular the people (including future generations) whose rights we seek to protect and advance. Depending on the way we work, we are further accountable to our members, supporters, ecosystems, staff, volunteers, donors, partners or regulatory bodies. In balancing the different views of our stakeholders, we will be guided by the following 12 Commitments.

Accountability is dynamic!

Being accountable for us means more than audited accounts and published reports. At the heart of accountability is a constant dialogue with our key stakeholders about what they want, what they offer and how we can work together effectively. Feedback from our key stakeholders will inform decisions at all levels of the organisations to advance sustainable impact. This dynamic understanding of accountability is at the heart of the 12 Accountability Commitments.



The 12 Accountability Commitments

Accountable Now and eight accountability networks from Africa, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, Latin America and the Caribbean worked together for two years to develop the 12 Accountability Commitments below. The Commitments capture a globally shared, dynamic understanding of accountability and are written in plain English to facilitate dialogue with our stakeholders and communication with the wider public. Taken together, they promise a powerful contribution of our organisations to the benefit of people and the environment and an invitation to hold us to account on how well we deliver.

What we want to achieve

- 1. Justice and equality:** We will address injustice, exclusion, inequality, poverty and violence to create healthy societies for all.
- 2. Women's rights and gender equality:** We will promote women's and girls' rights and enhance gender equality.
- 3. Healthy planet:** We will protect the natural environment and enhance its ability to support life for future generations.
- 4. Lasting positive change:** We will deliver long-term positive results.

Our approach to change

- 5. People-driven work:** We will ensure that the people we work with have a key role in driving our work.
- 6. Strong partnerships:** We will work in fair and respectful partnerships to achieve shared goals.
- 7. Advocating for fundamental change:** We will address root causes by advocating for fundamental change.
- 8. Open organisations:** We will be transparent about who we are, what we do and our successes and failures.

What we do internally

- 9. Empowered and effective staff and volunteers:** We will invest in staff and volunteers to develop their full potential and achieve our goals.
- 10. Well-handled resources:** We will handle our resources responsibly to reach our goals and serve the public good.
- 11. Responsive decision-making:** We will ensure our decisions are responsive to feedback from the people affected by our work, partners, volunteers and staff.
- 12. Responsible leadership:** We will ensure our management and governing body are accountable.



What we want to achieve

The first four Commitments spell out the overarching ambitions of civil society organisations. We subscribe to all and contribute in particular to those that are closest to our mission.

Commitment 1	Key Actions
<p><i>Justice and equality</i></p> <p>We will address injustice, exclusion, inequality, poverty and violence to create healthy societies for all.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listen to people, understand and address the root causes and effects of injustice, violence and inequality.2. Lead by example: be inclusive, respect and promote human rights in our organisation and make sure we do no harm ourselves.3. Support people to know their rights and to hold accountable those responsible for respecting, protecting and fulfilling them.4. Collaborate with other actors to collectively address the root causes and effects of injustice, violence and inequality and to ensure all people's rights are respected and protected.

Commitment 2	Key Actions
<p><i>Women's rights and gender equality</i></p> <p>We will promote women's and girls' rights and enhance gender equality.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Listen to women and men, girls and boys to understand and address the root causes and effects of discrimination and gender inequality.2. Lead by example: address gender inequality and ensure women's rights are respected in all we do.3. Empower women and girls to live more fulfilled lives.4. Work closely with all parts of society, including men and boys, to drive lasting economic, political and social change towards women's and girl's rights and gender equality.



Commitment 3	Key Actions
<p><i>Healthy planet</i></p> <p>We will protect the natural environment and enhance its ability to support life for future generations.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Listen to people and consult experts to understand the environmental issues faced by people and nature, and how to best address them. 2. Lead by example: Map our organisation’s environmental impact, minimise it to the extent possible and be open about our successes and failures. 3. Motivate and support people to protect the environment and to promote systemic change for a healthy planet. 4. Collaborate with actors from different sectors to develop innovative and systemic solutions to environmental issues.

Commitment 4	Key Actions
<p><i>Lasting positive change</i></p> <p>We will deliver long-term positive results.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Learn from people and partners where we can add most value to what already exists. 2. Support people to have the information, resources and capacity to actively drive the changes we want to see collectively. 3. Evaluate our long-term results in consultation with the people we work with, including unintended negative effects. 4. Collaborate with other actors in ways that build on one another’s strengths and ensure accountability for our collective impact. 5. Continuously monitor, evaluate, learn, adapt and innovate with a focus on lasting results.



Our approach to change

Commitment 5	Key Actions
<p>People-driven work</p> <p>We will ensure that the people we work with have a key role in driving our work.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Learn from the people we work with and represent so their issues are our goals.2. Support people in taking active roles to drive the change we collectively want to see.3. Ensure that people's views are well reflected in our decision-making processes at all levels of our organisation.4. Invite and act on people's feedback to improve our performance and collective impact.

Commitment 6	Key Actions
<p><i>Strong partnerships</i></p> <p>We will work in fair and respectful partnerships to achieve shared goals.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Identify organisations that work towards similar goals and build respectful partnerships that play to each other's strengths.2. Ensure that the roles and responsibilities of our organisation and our partners are clear and fair.3. Collaborate with different kinds of organisations to achieve shared goals.4. Share information, resources and knowledge with our partners and take important decisions collectively.



Commitment 7	Key Actions
<p data-bbox="237 651 531 719"><i>Advocating for fundamental change</i></p> <p data-bbox="237 757 592 860">We will address root causes by advocating for fundamental change.</p>	<ol data-bbox="651 624 1362 1176" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="651 624 1362 692">1. Ensure our advocacy work is based on evidence and is informed by the views of affected people.<li data-bbox="651 730 1362 797">2. Advocate for positive changes which address both root causes and their effects.<li data-bbox="651 835 1362 947">3. Support people - including affected people - to learn, connect, mobilise and make their voices heard.<li data-bbox="651 985 1362 1052">4. Mitigate the risks for people involved in or affected by our advocacy.<li data-bbox="651 1090 1362 1176">5. Evaluate the effects of our advocacy in consultation with affected people.

Commitment 8	Key Actions
<p data-bbox="237 1281 517 1314"><i>Open organisations</i></p> <p data-bbox="237 1352 624 1487">We will be transparent about who we are, what we do and our successes and failures.</p>	<ol data-bbox="651 1254 1394 1991" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="651 1254 1394 1388">1. Share information on who we are, what we do, how decisions are made, the resources we have, and the positive and negative impacts of our work.<li data-bbox="651 1426 1394 1538">2. Share information in a timely and accurate manner and in ways which are accessible to all people.<li data-bbox="651 1576 1394 1688">3. Establish and uphold clear procedures in our organisation to respect privacy rights and protect personal data from misuse.<li data-bbox="651 1727 1394 1839">4. Provide opportunities for people to question our work and engage in constructive dialogues to reach a shared understanding where possible.<li data-bbox="651 1877 1394 1991">5. Ensure our communication and marketing is reflective of our values and protects people's dignity and privacy.



What we do internally

Commitment 9	Key Actions
<p><i>Empowered and effective staff and volunteers</i></p> <p>We will invest in staff and volunteers to develop their full potential and achieve our goals.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ensure that staff and volunteers share and act in line with our values and professional standards.2. Put in place recruitment and employment practices that are fair and transparent and value diversity.3. Encourage staff and volunteers to constantly improve their skills and provide them with the resources they need to do this.4. Involve staff and volunteers at all levels of our organisation in our planning and decision-making and encourage leadership.5. Protect the personal safety of people who work with us and create fair and supportive workplaces.

Commitment 10	Key Actions
<p><i>Well-handled resources</i></p> <p>We will handle our resources responsibly to reach our goals and serve the public good.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Acquire resources in ways that align with our values, independence and goals.2. Manage resources responsibly, using them for the causes they were provided for and in ways that maximise impact.3. Comply with professional accounting standards and ensure strict financial controls to reduce the risk of corruption, bribery, misuse of funds, and conflicts of interest.4. Report openly and transparently about who provides our resources and how we manage them.



Commitment 11	Key Actions
<p><i>Responsive decision-making</i></p> <p>We will ensure our decisions are responsive to feedback from the people affected by our work, partners, volunteers and staff.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Invite and analyse feedback and complaints from key stakeholder groups to inform decision-making. 2. Ensure decision-making processes at all levels are informed by and responsive to feedback from our stakeholders, especially from people affected by our work. 3. Clarify and communicate how people can provide input and feedback into decision-making processes. 4. Enable frontline staff and volunteers to respond to feedback and make decisions in real time. 5. Communicate about the feedback received, how it was used and what changes have been made.

Commitment 12	Key Actions
<p><i>Responsible leadership</i></p> <p>We will ensure our management and governing body are accountable.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Ensure an independent governing body oversees our strategic direction, legal compliance, risk management and performance. 2. Hold governing body and management equally accountable for delivering on our strategic goals and fulfilling the commitments in this standard. 3. Nurture a culture of accountability where all staff and volunteers feel a strong sense of accountability for their actions and impacts. 4. Support responsible, visionary and innovative leadership at all levels. 5. Take internal and external complaints and disputes seriously, creating safe spaces and appropriate mechanisms to address them.



Fulfilling our commitments

A Reporting and Assessment Framework will accompany the 12 Accountability Commitments. The framework will outline what success looks like and how Members of Accountable Now will be held to account.

As Members of Accountable Now, we commit to:

- ▶ Apply the Commitments progressively to all our policies, activities and operations.
- ▶ Report annually on our performance against the Commitments.
- ▶ Submit each report to Accountable Now's Independent Review Panel for assessment.
- ▶ Publish reports with the Panel's feedback on both our own and Accountable Now's websites.