

12

ACCOUNTABILITY
COMMITMENTS



**Accountable
Now**

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 stakeholders enhances decisions at all levels of a responsive organisation 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 & Equality:** We will address injustice, exclusion, inequality, poverty and violence to create healthy societies for all.
2. **Women's Rights & 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, Effective Staff & 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

Justice & Equality

We will address injustice, exclusion, inequality, poverty and violence to create healthy societies for all.

KEY ACTIONS

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

Women's Rights & Gender Equality

We will promote women's and girls' rights and enhance gender equality.

KEY ACTIONS

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 girls' rights and gender equality.



COMMITMENT 3

Healthy Planet

We will protect the natural environment and enhance its ability to support life for future generations.

KEY ACTIONS

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

Lasting Positive Change

We will deliver long-term positive results.

KEY ACTIONS

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

People-driven Work

We will ensure that the people we work with have a key role in driving our work.

KEY ACTIONS

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

Strong Partnerships

We will work in fair and respectful partnerships to achieve shared goals.

KEY ACTIONS

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

Advocating for Fundamental Change

We will address root causes by advocating for fundamental change.

KEY ACTIONS

1. Ensure our advocacy work is based on evidence and is informed by the views of affected people.
2. Advocate for positive changes which address both root causes and their effects.
3. Support people – including affected people – to learn, connect, mobilise and make their voices heard.
4. Mitigate the risks for people involved in or affected by our advocacy.
5. Evaluate the effects of our advocacy in consultation with affected people.



COMMITMENT 8

Open Organisations

We will be transparent about who we are, what we do and our successes and failures.

KEY ACTIONS

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.
2. Share information in a timely and accurate manner and in ways which are accessible to all people.
3. Establish and uphold clear procedures in our organisation to respect privacy rights and protect personal data from misuse.
4. Provide opportunities for people to question our work and engage in constructive dialogues to reach a shared understanding where possible.
5. Ensure our communication and marketing is reflective of our values and protects people's dignity and privacy.

What we do internally





COMMITMENT 9

Empowered, Effective Staff & Volunteers

We will invest in staff and volunteers to develop their full potential and achieve our goals.

KEY ACTIONS

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

Well-handled Resources

We will handle our resources responsibly to reach our goals and serve the public good.

KEY ACTIONS

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

Responsive Decision-making

We will ensure our decisions are responsive to feedback from the people affected by our work, partners, volunteers and staff.

KEY ACTIONS

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

Responsible Leadership

We will ensure our management and governing body are accountable.

KEY ACTIONS

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

The 12 Accountability Commitments are accompanied by a Reporting and Assessment Framework. The framework outlines what success looks like and how Members of Accountable Now are 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.**



