ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR THE POST2015 AGENDA:

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BASICS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

- The **obligation** of power-holders/duty bearers to account for/ take responsibility for their actions.

- A fundamental principle of democracy is that **citizens** have the **right to demand** accountability and **public actors** have an **obligation** to be accountable. Therefore in a Democracy, Public Sector Accountability is a consequence of the implicit social compact between citizens and their delegated representatives and agents.

- Member States agree to a Post 2015 agenda (**Non binding**) yet **obliged** to be accountable for its delivery.

- However accountability for the Post 2015 agenda is a moral obligation that governments owe to their citizens.

- **NOT AN ISSUE OF PENALTIES OR REWARDS BUT MORAL RESPONSIBILITY**
Accountability: Vertical vs. Horizontal

**Vertical Accountability**
- **Upward**: Requires reporting and accounting to higher authorities
- **Downward**: Requires responding to citizens demands and needs at large
  - Example: elections, referendums and a wide variety of SA mechanisms involving pressure from citizens.

**Horizontal Accountability**
- Require public officials to report “sideways” to other officials and agencies within the state.
  - Examples: co-ordination mechanisms, control agencies, commissions etc.
2. BUILDING BLOCKS OF ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is a chain, circular not a straight line and therefore a continuous process. It has:

1. Three core constituents:
   - Responsibility,
   - Answerability and
   - Enforceability (incentives +/-)

and

2. Three building blocks
   - i) Measuring Progress (*Data/Evidence*)
   - (ii) *Sharing & disseminating information*, *(Information & Communication)*
   - (iii) *Engaging in a process of negotiation for Change/Reform Agenda* *(Advocacy & Influencing)*
i. Measuring Progress: Data & Information

- Generating relevant information and making it public is the first component of the accountability chain: Building **credible evidence of progress on clearly defined deliverables**
  - Obtaining and analyzing 3 forms of data;
    - **supply-side information** from government and service providers (mainly official statistics)
    - **demand-side information** from users of government services; communities and citizens (citizen perceptions).
    - Open/Big Data

- Challenges:
  - **Transparency** of government; the sensitivity & political nature of data
  - **Capacity** to produce and provide reliable/accurate data in real time
  - **Reliability** & representativeness of demand-side data
  - **Technology challenge:** availability of Phone & internet services
  - **Civil society capacity** to guide/Support citizens
ii. Disseminating & Sharing Outcomes

- Wide dissemination of outcomes, factors responsible, opinions and concerns of citizens – (help to better understand progress and how to address constraints).
- Creating spaces for public debate and platforms for citizen-state dialogue, on & off-line
- Making strategic use of (or helping to develop) both modern and traditional forms of media.
- Challenge: ensure that the voices of poorer and more marginal groups are not drowned out or dominated by more powerful and vocal groups.
iii. Taking Action: Action Agenda

Setting & Negotiating Change

The most crucial and challenging element in the accountability process is to be able to elicit a response from public officials: **Take action to achieve real change:**

- **Multi-stake holder-state interaction:** Advocacy & Influencing with government officials, Parliamentarians, Local Authorities, private sector etc. or

- **Agreeing on a course of action to remedy the situation**
  - Policy reforms; refining investment strategies, implementation mechanisms etc.
  - Frameworks and mechanisms to monitor implementation of the reform agenda.
  - Measurement of progress ➔ starting point of the accountability chain
3. Critical Factors In Accountability

(i) **SUPPLY SIDE:**
Attitudes, capacities, willingness and ability of the state to open up, listen, engage and take action.
- Data constraints, Capacity of National Statistical Systems
- Access to information laws; budget transparency
- Clear commitments; deliverables, timelines etc.

(ii) **Enabling Environment:**
Opportunities for enhanced accountability are greater where
- Political willingness to be held accountable
- Democratic space: and basic political and civil rights are guaranteed.
- Rule of law, press freedom, access to information & freedom of expression, association and assembly.
- Socio-cultural and economic factors: Citizens:
  - Expectations of and relations with the state,
  - Confidence & willingness to question authority or speak out.
- Civil society **credibility and capacity** to organize and act.
(ii) **DEMAND SIDE**: Attitudes and capacities of citizens and civil society actors:

Willingness and ability of citizens and civil society to actively seek government accountability can be a major obstacle in contexts where civic engagement is weak. Key issues include:

- the **technical capacity of civil society** actors; including independent media to research, analyze, demystify and disseminate relevant information;
- the **capacity** to organize, mobilize, build coalitions and speak with a common voice;
- the **willingness and ability** to **interact and negotiate with government** and to adopt a constructive and solution-oriented approach; and
- the **capacity** of CSOs to build public support and to demonstrate **credible and accountable** behavior.
CONCLUSIONS

1. Accountability for the Post2015 development agenda should be seen as a moral obligation to citizens.

2. The accountability framework must place equal emphasis on all three aspects; Data, Communication and Reform; Agenda setting and implementation.

3. The framework must emphasise positivity; help to improve the socio-economic status of people rather than focus on looking for loophole and punitive measures.

4. Wide stakeholder participation and buy in; all stakeholders must see the benefits and usefulness.