

IMPROVING ACCESS TO RMNCAH COMMODITIES

OVERVIEW

At the request of the Investors Group at their Second meeting in February 2016, a small Task Team of technical experts (see Annex 1) was convened to discuss ways to address current challenges in access to reproductive, maternal, newborn, children's and adolescent health (RMNCAH) commodities. This paper provides an overview of the task team's discussions and the emerging focus areas that were identified.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

Improving access to RMNCAH commodities requires a range of in-country and global activities. GFF partners are currently involved in most of these activities and some activities may require more adequate resourcing in the future. Emerging focus areas for commodity access were identified through consultations and review.

Coordination and collaboration across agencies is crucial for improving access to RMNCAH commodities. The architecture for coordination and collaboration on commodity access issues is complex, dynamic and constantly evolving. Multiple work groups provide a forum for GFF partners to collaborate on commodity access issues but the term of one key group that is focused on coordination and collaboration for RMNCAH commodities is coming to an end in 2016.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Investors Group is asked to provide overall guidance and direction on the role of the GFF in RMNCAH commodities access. More specifically, the Investors Group is asked to provide direction on whether they see value in the Commodities Task Team continuing its deliberations and synthesizing information to provide an update in November around areas of focus and investment needs. Alternatively, are the current forums and structures adequate to address the highlighted challenges in commodity access?

This guidance will help inform next steps for further analysis.

BACKGROUND

Gaps in the availability and access to reproductive, maternal, newborn, children's and adolescent health (RMNCAH) commodities have been identified as a major barrier to improving the lives of women, adolescents, and children. Barriers include the lack of information on financing, procurement, weak supply chains, inadequate regulatory capacity, and lack of coordination across different stakeholders. At the request of the Investors Group a small task team of technical experts (see Annex 1) was convened to discuss activities for a potential GFF role in improving access to RMNCAH commodities. The task team's specific mandate was to

- Map and assess what kind of global public goods on commodities are most relevant for GFF countries currently;
- Review the landscape to understand what global-level actions are already well-addressed by existing efforts;
- Identify and prioritize key work streams that the GFF can potentially advance through additional analysis.

This paper provides an overview of the task team's discussions and emerging focus areas in RMNCAH commodity access.

TASK TEAM MEMBERSHIP AND PROCESS

The Commodities Task Team was chaired by Jennifer Adams, Senior Deputy Assistant Administrator in the Bureau for Global Health, USAID, and had ten members from different IG partner countries/agencies. The task team conducted two formal meetings/consultations (via conference calls) and one informal consultation in Geneva. The discussions focused on understanding the challenges in RMNCAH commodity access, the activities of current GFF partners and areas requiring GFF engagement. The task team recognized that GFF partners are carrying out a vast range of activities in improving access to commodities and it may not be possible to create an exhaustive list of all such activities. Discussions focused on capturing the ones that have the strongest need for global coordination although it was not feasible for the discussions to completely avoid discussing country level activities.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR GFF ENGAGEMENT IN THE COMMODITY AREA

Addressing bottlenecks in commodity access requires extensive in-country activities. However, there are some activities related to commodity financing, procurement, quality assurance, distribution, and use which cannot be adequately addressed by individual countries or agencies acting alone and require global coordination. The creation of such Global Public Goods (GPGs) requires an appropriate architecture. Potential focus areas for GFF engagement will be based on an assessment of the GFF's comparative advantage, the extent to which other actors are able to address the challenges identified, the potential impact, and the relevance to the GFF. In identifying priorities, the task team considered the work initiated by UNCLSC, RMNCH Trust Fund and other initiatives related to RMNCAH commodities.

ANALYSIS OF CURRENT ACTIVITIES

GFF partners are focused on improving access to RMNCAH commodities through a variety of approaches and investments. Current activities include those that have a global public goods focus and those that resolve

bottlenecks in specific countries. Given the range of activities and need for coordination, multiple work groups and initiatives exist for GFF partners to collaborate on commodity access. Architecture for coordination and collaboration on commodity access issues is complex, dynamic and constantly evolving.

Activities being carried out by GFF partners could be categorized into the following four broad areas:

- Gathering robust information on financing, procurement, and quality of RMNCAH commodities;
- Maintaining a “healthy market” for RMNCAH commodities, including high quality;
- Better in-country supply chain systems to improve availability of RMNCAH commodities;
- Ensuring commodity access in humanitarian settings.

While it is useful to segment the activities into these four areas (See Annex 2 for details) for the purposes of understanding and prioritizing, the four areas are closely interlinked and focusing on only one or two without investing in the others will not lead to sustainable fixes to commodity access problems. USAID, WHO, World Bank, UNICEF, UNFPA, RMNCAH Trust Fund, RHSC, and other partners are involved in many activities for RMNCAH commodities in each of these categories. Some of the partner activities are in-country activities and can only be addressed at the individual country level. In addition to GFF partners working directly on RMNCAH commodity access issues, agencies such as UNITAID, GAVI, Global Fund are involved in similar activities for commodities for HIV/AIDS, TB, Malaria, Vaccine Preventable Diseases and Hep C. A list of activities emphasized in the discussion and current initiatives being implemented by GFF partners is provided in Annex 3. Please note that this list is not exhaustive but is an attempt to capture some of the key activities and initiatives.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GFF ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned earlier, a large number of activities required to improve access to RMNCAH commodities entail strong engagement at the country level. They are best undertaken under the leadership of national governments using existing structures and with partner engagement in specific areas. Some of these activities may require expansion of scale through larger resource investments. For some other global activities, the rate limiting step is the transfer of technical outputs into country policy structures. New approaches and investments may be required to address this. However, most of these were not considered to be necessarily GFF’s comparative advantage.

Commodity access activities that require coordination across a broad set of global partners are also being carried out by inter-agency workgroups and other collaboration platforms. Some of these platforms are in their early stages and over time they can be more adequately resourced to carry out the coordination and collaboration role.

The task team identified focus areas where GFF partners are already engaged but may require support to further amplify their scale. A list of focus activities identified by the task team is provided in Annex 4. Several of the focus areas identified require stronger coordination and collaboration across agencies in the areas of procurement, quality assurance, regulatory strengthening, market shaping, distribution and use. The architecture for coordination and collaboration on commodity access issues is complex, dynamic and constantly evolving. Multiple working groups with diverse membership exist and provide a forum for different global agencies to collaborate on commodity access issues. However, the term of one key group that is focused on coordination and collaboration specifically for RMNCAH commodities is coming to an end in 2016. It is important to examine

whether other existing structures will fulfill the much needed coordination role for RMNCAH commodities in the future.

In addition to the focus areas above, the Task Team's discussions also highlighted the need to better outline models for engagement with the private sector in the commodity access area, and collaborations with non-RMNCAH global agencies such as UNITAID, Global Fund, Gavi who have significant expertise and experience in dealing with issues involving commodity access. Weak understanding of financing flows, procurement and supplier quality, especially when commodities are procured with domestic resources at the national or sub-national level, was identified as a gap in existing knowledge.

Five specific areas were highlighted where the GFF Investor Group can help enhance the visibility and saliency of issues that are important to ensuring commodity access:

1. Highlight the value of investing to create healthy markets for commodities. Healthy markets require a focus that goes beyond price.
2. Resolving in-country supply chain bottlenecks requires concerted investments and political buy in from country leadership. Strong IG support required for technical interventions to succeed.
3. Building a stronger case for richer data and information for RMNCAH commodities.
4. RMNCAH access in emergency and conflict settings requires investing in different operational models.
5. Support fundraising efforts to ensure that the critical streams of work undertaken by GFF partners are adequately resourced.

ACTION REQUESTED

The Investors Group is asked to provide overall guidance and direction on the role of the GFF in RMNCAH commodities access.

More specifically, the Investors Group is asked to provide direction on whether they see value in the Commodity Task Team continuing its deliberations and synthesizing information to provide an update in November around areas of focus and investment needs. Alternatively, are the current forums and structures adequate to address the highlighted challenges in commodity access?

ANNEX 1

TASK TEAM COMPOSITION

| Member | Institution |
|---|---------------------------------|
| Jennifer Adams* (Chair) Debbie Armbruster Aye Aye Thwin | USAID |
| Andrew Dawe Aminur Rahman | Canada |
| Lisa Hedman | WHO |
| Pascal Bijleveld | RMNCH Trust Fund |
| David Sarley | Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation |
| Sennen Hounton | UNFPA |
| Mari Grepstad | NORAD |
| Debbie Armbruster | USAID |
| Mark Young Francisco Blanco | |
| Lauren Franzel | GAVI |
| Rama Lakshminarayanan | GFF Secretariat |
| Prashant Yadav | World Bank Consultant |

In addition, colleagues from DFID also provided additional inputs.

ANNEX 2

FOUR MAIN CATEGORIES OF ACTIVITIES IDENTIFIED

Activities needing support to increase availability, access and quality of RMNCAH commodities

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Robust information on financing, procurement, and quality of RMNCAH commodities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mapping financing flows and procurement at the national (and sub-national) level • Which commodities are purchased through which financing stream and which procurement process? • Mapping flow of financing, credit terms and comparisons of prices paid • Who are the current suppliers at global, regional, national and sub-national levels? • Quality of current supply sources? |
| 2 | Maintaining a “healthy market” for RMNCAH commodities, including high quality | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities to maintain quality standards in procurement • Pharmacovigilance and post-market surveillance activities (global and in-country) • Strengthening regulatory capacity • Preventing and detecting substandard, spurious, fake, falsified & counterfeit (SSFFC) Country registration and EML status • Global RMNCAH supplier landscapes • Assessing opportunities for market shaping on an on-going basis • Improving quality of regional manufacturers |
| 3 | Better in-country supply chain systems to improve availability of RMNCAH commodities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination role for supply chain improvements requiring strong in-country partnership and collaboration • Creating visibility for supply chain bottlenecks • Investments in supply chain improvement through GFF investment cases • Sharing best practices across GFF countries • Coordination with other efforts at SC improvement (outside RMNCAH commodity space e.g. Global Fund, GAVI) • Commodity access in the private sector- channel engagement and strengthening |
| 4 | Other | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring access to RMNCAH commodities during conflict, disaster and emergencies |

The four areas are closely interlinked. Focusing on one/two will not resolve commodity access problems

* Many of these are in-country activities and will need to be addressed at the country level.

ANNEX 3

CURRENT LANDSCAPE OF GFF PARTNER ACTIVITIES

Note: This is not an exhaustive list

| <i>Current projects and partner initiatives</i> | |
|---|--|
| 1 | <p>Robust information on financing, procurement, and quality of RMNCAH commodities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • USAID mapping study in 5 countries to understand financing and procurement • RHSC project to understand financing and procurement for RH products • JSI multi-country study to understand financing and procurement within 30 countries • UNCoLSC work on information re procurement, quality • USAID & UNFPA supplier information portals |
| 2 | <p>Maintaining a “healthy market” for RMNCAH commodities, including high quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO ongoing initiatives on pharmaco-vigilance, regulatory strengthening, SSSFC and collaborative dossier review • USAID work on pharmaco-vigilance and medicines quality monitoring (SIAPS and PQM) • USP on strengthening quality of regional suppliers • UNICEF-SD work on influencing markets and secured financing • UNICEF-SD Vaccine Independence Initiative expansion to other commodities • RMNCH Trust Pilot to design and test a Commodity Credit Facility in 5 countries • UNCoLSC and RMNCH Trust Fund work on RMNCH market shaping • DFID-CHAI work on RH commodity market shaping • DFID, Gates Foundation and others on “returnable capital” and role in commodity access • USAID-CII work on market shaping • GAVI, Global Fund and UNITAID’s market shaping initiatives |
| 3 | <p>Better in-country supply chain systems to improve availability of RMNCAH commodities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inter-Agency Supply Chain Working Group • USAID new GHSC project • Gates Foundation’s ARC for supply chain • UNCoLSC supply chain TRT • WHO activities on supply chain strengthening • WB’s knowledge product on supply chain improvement • Global Fund and GAVI initiatives on supply chain strengthening |
| 4 | <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNFPA, UNICEF commodity and technical assistance in conflict and emergency settings |

ANNEX 4

EMERGING FOCUS AREAS FOR RMNCAH COMMODITY ACCESS

| Activities currently being carried out by GFF partners which would require additional resourcing or activities requiring further analytic work | |
|--|---|
| 1 | <p>Robust information on financing, procurement, and quality of RMNCAH commodities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination across partners to share data on procurement, financing and quality • Sharing demand information with suppliers • Improve information on RMNCAH commodity financing, procurement & quality especially when commodities procured using domestic resources |
| 2 | <p>Maintaining a “healthy market” for RMNCAH commodities, including high quality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development & dissemination of global pharmaco-vigilance model plans • Regulatory capacity strengthening • Sharing supplier quality information across countries and procurers • A community of practice for RMNCAH commodities (market shaping, procurement, supply chain) • A potential “RMNCAH market-shaping consortium” • Develop and Disseminate RMNCAH supplier landscapes • Pilot of Commodity Credit Facility in 5 countries • Stronger Engagement with UNITAID |
| 3 | <p>Better in-country supply chain systems to improve availability of RMNCAH commodities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate different investments in supply chain through ISG • Strengthen knowledge base for sustainable interventions for Supply Chain strengthening • Partnership with private sector and improving access in private sector • Ensure up-to-date and robust quantification of essential RMNCAH commodities • Analyze GFF investment cases to identify supply chain issues which repeat and require coordinated global investment |
| 4 | <p>Other</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and strengthen models for providing RMNCAH access in emergency, conflict |

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