



PROMISES KEPT: ENSURING AMBITION AND ACCOUNTABILITY THROUGH A RIO+20 “COMPENDIUM OF COMMITMENTS”

JOSEPH FOTI

SUMMARY

In an effort to ensure that the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) generates meaningful outcomes, governments and other stakeholders increasingly support using the Conference to announce specific and time-bound commitments, and to agree on a “framework” to hold each other accountable for results.

But without proper consideration of the content of commitments and the institutions which will shepherd them, this so-called “Compendium of Commitments” risks becoming a lost opportunity for ambition and accountability.

Governments are negotiating the contents of a “Zero Draft” of the outcome document. Ideally, this document will set forth agreed-upon principles, goals, and means of moving economies to more sustainable patterns of life. The ultimate Paragraph 128 of the current Zero Draft, “Compendium of Commitments,” leaves space for all stakeholders, including governments, to pledge specific actions to achieve sustainable development at the international, regional, national, and subnational levels.

As the Compendium of Commitments concept becomes formalized, the Access Initiative recommends that governments pay increased attention to the ambition of pledges and the still-undefined “framework for accountability” laid out in the Zero Draft. WRI reviewed six past and current commitment-based partnerships, some considered more successful than others. Based on this review, we recommend that Member States, in designing the Compendium, improve the credibility of the concept by introducing text to the following effect:

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- **Make pledges ambitious:**
 - Make pledges reflect globally agreed-upon goals. Goals should either reflect universal principles (such as Principle 10 of the Rio Convention) or should aim to solve collective action problems (such as elimination of a particular form of transboundary pollution).
 - To be suitably ambitious, commitments to strengthen and universalize global norms should be systemic (rather than marginal reforms) and where they attempt to solve collective action problems, they should be scaled to the challenge of the environmental problem.
 - Make pledges specific, time-bound, measurable, and verifiable: The accuracy of reports on commitments can be monitored by parties other than the reporting party.
 - Support domestic constituencies' participation in the design of pledges and commitments.
- **Support implementation:**
 - Provide support to strengthen weak agencies so that they can effectively implement commitments.
 - Ensure that commitments are made at the institutional, rather than the individual level.
 - Continue support for non-governmental counterparts beyond the pledge phase into the review phase.
- **Support a strong review and compliance process:**
 - Make the pledge-and-review process periodical.
 - Examine the range of options for compliance and performance monitoring from self-reporting to independent, regular third party evaluation.
 - Consider a range or combination of actors to carry out monitoring.
 - Consider a range of enforcement mechanisms, from publication of independent findings to denial of future membership in an initiative.
 - Secure predictable funding for pledge-and-review initiatives.
 - Allow the secretariat of the initiative enough autonomy to meet evolving needs of members.

Box 1 | Summary

The Access Initiative (TAI), a network of more than 150 civil society organizations working to promote Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration, the “Environmental Democracy” principle, supports the Compendium of Commitments as an effort to achieve visionary outcomes at Rio+20. We welcome commitments at all levels with significant impact on sustainable development. These include new freedom of information laws, open data portals (including environment and public health), monitoring data on air and water quality, facility-level pollution data, improvement of participatory practices especially in relation to the poor (e.g. in impact assessment), and development of new environmental procedures, and rules, or environmental courts and tribunals to increase access to justice. Additionally, TAI welcomes commitments that include policy changes, national or subnational programs, or partnerships to support sharing and capacity-building among actors.

TAI has been urging governments to come to Rio ready with commitments through the 3 Demands campaign (<http://www.accessinitiative.org/rio2012/node/1513>) in which TAI and its partners in more than 30 countries have formulated and submitted demands to their government to improve access to information, public participation, and access to justice.

To that end, we propose the following text to be integrated into the Outcome Document:

We welcome commitments to be made at Rio+20 and invite the Secretary-General to compile them in a registry/ compendium that will serve as an accountability framework. Such an accountability framework should be administered by a designated secretariat. Pledges themselves should be new or additional, specific, time-bound, measurable, verifiable, and scaled to the complexity of the sustainable development challenge. Pledges in the Compendium of Commitments made by governments should undergo a process of participatory development, review, and renewal.

INTRODUCTION

In an effort to ensure that the UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio +20) generates meaningful outcomes, governments and other stakeholders increasingly support using the Conference to announce specific and time-bound commitments, and to agree on a “framework” to hold each other accountable for results. This so-called “Compendium of Commitments” has been criticized as suggesting a “bottom up”, “pledge-and-review” approach that will lead to business-as-usual outcomes that don’t meet the sustainable development challenges ahead of us. In the few months remaining, proponents of the Compendium of Commitments will have to demonstrate that this approach will lead to ambitious actions and that the accountability framework is sufficiently robust to incentivize and track performance. Rio+20 participants can learn from the range of experiences with past pledge-and-review initiatives and focus on ways to improve the quality of the content of pledges and of the institutions and procedures designed to review them.

BACKGROUND

Rio +20 takes place in the context of a wider debate on the future of multilateralism and on the role of international law and international institutions in addressing global environment and development challenges. The 1992 Rio Earth Summit generated a variety of internationally agreed guidance and principles (Agenda 21, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development), spurred the adoption of three major, binding multilateral environmental agreements (MEAs) (the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC), the UN Convention to Combat Desertification, and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)).

The 2002 World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) focused on “implementation and compliance” rather than the development of new binding rules and obligations. To this end, it provided a platform for announcing “public private partnerships,” negotiated “bottom up” among interested parties (Brack 2000; Speth 2002; WRI 2004). But few of the more than 300 partnerships launched at WSSD have survived and the vast majority never resulted in significant change, due, at least in part, to the lack of any meaningful process for monitoring and review of performance.^{1 2}

The international climate change negotiations have, until recently, marked a similar trend away from “top down” treaty obligations contained in the 1997 Kyoto Protocol,

towards “pledges” proposed by each party in the 2010 Cancun Agreements. Others suggest that the more recent (2011) agreement by climate negotiators in Durban to aim towards a “protocol, another legal instrument or an outcome with legal force” means that an interest in negotiated, binding commitments remains.³ They also point to recent international agreement on new binding protocols to the CBD, and progress on a treaty to reduce mercury emissions.

In any case, it has been clear from the onset of the current negotiations that this Rio process is unlikely to lead to a new set of legally binding treaties. Until recently, it has, however, been unclear what alternative form of outcome would justify holding a global conference on sustainable development at a time of heightened concern about the future of the planet.

Yet there is some promise in the concept of pledges. Paragraph 128 of “The Future We Want - Zero Draft of the Outcome Document” states:

We welcome the voluntary⁴ commitments made at Rio+20 and invite the Secretary-General to compile them in a registry/ compendium that will serve as an accountability framework.

A process that invites participants to come forward with “voluntary commitments”, rather than negotiating them collectively, raises a set of design challenges that will confront proponents of a compendium in Rio:

1. How do we ensure a common level of quality of commitments to be specific, time-bound, measurable, and ambitious beyond business as usual?
2. How do we ensure that commitments related to challenges requiring collective action, involving transboundary pollution, damage to the global commons, equitable access to scarce resources, are ambitious enough, in the aggregate, to make the needed difference?
3. How do we ensure that commitments that address fundamental rights and basic needs, such as information, participation and justice, and clean water, food, shelter and health, are ambitious enough to respect individual human dignity?

4. How do we ensure that, in the absence of the force of law, there is an accountability framework robust enough to hold participants accountable to their constituencies and to each other to fulfill their commitments?

CURRENT PROPOSALS

Many governments and civil society groups have already declared the Zero Draft both overly broad and unambitious.⁵ While the Rio+20 process seems unlikely to “gel” around a set of specific outcomes that could be multilaterally negotiated and agreed by June, there is a range of themes and proposed actions that could form the basis for individual commitments and partnerships.

A process that invites governments (as well as civil society and the private sector groups) to make commitments that steer their societies to sustainable development may offer clear signals about what governments individually and collectively are willing to achieve. This process also provides a means of moving governments away from general statements of principle, and away from securing references in the text to what other governments should do, and towards identifying specific and time-bound targets that each is prepared to undertake.

While the intergovernmental negotiations have not yet reached Paragraph 128, the idea of using Rio+20 as a platform for making commitments has already been supported by a number of governments and observers:

- The **UNITED STATES** has stated that, “Each conference participant should also come to Rio with their own Compendium of Commitments that describes in detail how the individual groups or coalitions of participants will undertake action to help build a sustainable future,” but has left open the specifics on the structure of an accountability framework.⁶
- According to **MEXICO**, “A voluntary mechanism should be used for accountability in the implementation of the commitments already made in Rio and Johannesburg and those to be made at Rio+20. The mechanism would involve the presentation of national reports, encouraging the exchange of experiences and best practices between States and observers... to advance in the fulfillment of objectives and targets adopted at national level.”⁷

- The **EUROPEAN UNION**, its member states, and the **UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR EUROPE (UNECE)**, in their submissions to the Zero Draft, stated the need to, “Develop an accountability framework including timelines and benchmarks for progress and for tracking the provision, delivery and results of stakeholder commitments”.^{8,9}
- WRI and **THE ACCESS INITIATIVE** have called for national commitments following the “Three Demands” Campaign, in which coalitions of civil society organizations around the world have called on national governments to make key reforms in national governance. Such demands would be announced in a public forum at Rio+20.
- The **NATURAL RESOURCES DEFENSE COUNCIL (NRDC)** has developed a mock-up of a website, “Earth Promises,” which could flexibly contain commitments from across sectors and would allow for public tracking of commitments over time.¹⁰ An aspect of this proposal includes a “Global Center for Sustainability Actions,”¹¹ perhaps modeled on the Clinton Global Initiative (CGI).¹²
- **THE NATURE CONSERVANCY (TNC)** has already begun to secure commitments from national governments and corporations around “natural capital,” culminating in a showcase of projects and initiatives.¹³
- Of all of the proposals, the most ambitious description of the range of options for a Compendium of Commitments and the framework for accountability has come from the **UNITED NATIONS DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS (UNDESA)**. This description includes a range of review mechanisms from a universal periodic review to, at the other extreme, simple web publication.¹⁴

Others are more skeptical, concerned that agreements like a Compendium of Commitments could lead to another set of empty promises.^{15, 16} They would, presumably, prefer governments to agree multilaterally on a more focused set of priority themes and actions and, ideally, convert these into legally binding commitments.

If, between now and Rio, participants can agree to follow a basic set of design principles to govern unilateral commitments to be registered at the conference, and to have their performance against these commitments reviewed in a robust manner, the effort required to build and populate a Compendium of Commitments may be justified. If these individual commitments are coordinated in advance in the form of partnerships, or create patterns for partner-

ships to be designed at or soon after Rio, they could set in motion future agreements on collective action and set higher universal standards for protecting fundamental rights and interests.

With the right ambition and accountability framework, a Compendium of Commitments, even in the absence of a legally binding regime:

- Could complement or amplify existing legally binding agreements;
- Could be tailored to the specific country capacity, and with periodic review, would allow each government to tackle increasingly complex commitments;
- Could spur dialogue between national governments and domestic constituencies, including civil society, industry, and subnational governments. When developed in a participatory manner, this level of ownership can double;
- Could promote national ownership (both within and without government) and effectiveness of domestic and international investments in implementation.

Given the potential criticisms of weak ambition and low compliance, it is essential to identify factors that will increase credibility and accountability of the entire pledge-and-review process (or processes) that are part of Rio+20.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM ANALOGOUS PLEDGE-AND-REVIEW APPROACHES

To identify the range of factors which contribute to credible pledge-and-review processes—both ambition and accountability—WRI conducted a quick survey of six such frameworks. Pledge-and-review initiatives were selected for the variety of actors as well as the range of institutional design choices, although the authors’ focus is on national level commitments. Additionally, initiatives which have been mentioned during public participation events or national statements (whether formally or informally) were included. The initiatives selected were:

- Clinton Global Initiative (CGI), mentioned as a model for the Compendium of Commitments;
- Cancun Agreements, another pledge-and-review mechanism which some have held up as a bad model for the Compendium;¹⁷

- The OECD Guidelines on Multinational Enterprises and its Investment Committee, considered a voluntary initiative with an evolving review mechanism;
- The Open Government Partnership (OGP), a recently launched pledge-and-review initiative with an innovative review mechanism and a multi-sectoral steering committee; and
- Type II Partnerships (prior pledge-and-review initiatives arising from Johannesburg) focusing on:
 - The Partnership for Principle 10 (PP10), a prior partnership, promoting access to information, public participation, and access to justice, of which WRI was the secretariat.
 - The Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV), considered a successful example of a Type II partnership.

A short description of each initiative is included in the annex. While a paper of this length and this approach cannot fairly assess the effectiveness or success across pledge-and-review initiatives, it does attempt to capture the range and variety of parameters selected in past or existing initiatives. WRI asked a series of basic questions such as:

- Who is committing?
- To whom are they committing?
- What is the type of commitment (money, result, partnership, conduct)?
- What is the nature or substance of the commitment (ambition, scope, and scale)?
- What are the accountability mechanisms?
 - Is there a process for review of compliance and performance?
 - What are the compliance mechanisms?

WRI applied these questions to the six cases and reviewed literature on compliance and performance in multilateral agreements to capture some lessons learned. Three major areas of institutional design emerged as critical choices in developing pledge-and-review initiatives: ambition of pledges, implementing country context, and the framework for review-and-compliance. We deal with each individually below.

LESSON 1: MAKE AMBITIOUS PLEDGES

The credibility of a commitment, to a large extent, depends on the content of the pledges. This has several elements:

- **GLOBALLY AGREED UPON GOALS:** Different initiatives reviewed reflected different types of commitments. In some, the aim was to strengthen and universalize global norms (as in the OECD Investment Committee or PP10), most often through implementation at the national or subnational level. In others, the pledges sought to tackle collective action problems, those problems which could not be met without cooperation between states and other actors, as in the PCFV. Each of these is a suitable criterion for inclusion in a Compendium of Commitments. Arguably, there could be a third category of commitments which would reflect entirely national or local aims (such as prevention of a destructive highway) but which would be “renewed” through the inclusion in a Compendium of Commitments with its promise of increased accountability. To ensure adequate flexibility for this type of commitment, some initiatives, such as the OGP, have set a minimum number of “Grand Challenges” for each member.
- **SYSTEMIC CHANGES:** In the case of commitments which seek to strengthen and universalize global norms, commitments should be systemic. Evidence from the initiatives examined suggested that processes were more credible where parties committed to transformative, or “economy wide” changes, rather than one-off projects. As an example, a government committing to implement Principle 10 would come off as more credible if they pledged to change rules on public participation in all regulation, rather than in a single regulation or single locality.
- **SCALED TO THE CHALLENGE:** For commitments addressing collective action problems, such as transboundary pollution, commitments should adequately address the environmental problems they face. The accounting processes set up in the wake of the Cancun Agreements by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and other actors allowed for pledges to be measured against absolute environmental targets. This was also successful in the case of the Lead Elimination Campaign of the PCFV.
- **SPECIFIC:** Commitments are more robust when they avoid general statements of principle and focus on specific achievable actions/outcomes.

- **TIME-BOUND:** Commitments should set clear time frames that allow for benchmarking of progress.
- **MEASURABLE:** Commitments should have clear indicators of progress. Ideally, both in terms of outputs, but also in terms of actual outcomes (such as the indicators for the Millennium Development Goals).
- **VERIFIABLE:** The accuracy of reports on commitments can be independently monitored by parties other than the reporting party.
- **PARTICIPATORY:** In the case of the OGP, there are few specific requirements for the ambition of particular pledges, but there is a mandatory process of consultation and participation for civil society. Properly executed, this political process can lead to sufficiently ambitious and achievable outcomes. A process of dialogue and reinforcement between national governments and domestic constituencies can result in reforms with broader ownership and greater ambition.¹⁸

In the case of a Compendium of Commitments, some combination of substantive definition of systemic commitments, and transparent and participatory procedures to capture demand from domestic constituencies can help to ensure more ambitious commitments.

LESSON 2: IMPLEMENTING COUNTRY CONTEXT

As national governments will be among the implementers of the most ambitious commitments, based on past pledge-and-review initiatives, it is critical to consider two factors in the design of such an initiative:

- **IMPLEMENTING BUREAUCRACY:** Research suggests that multilateral environmental agreements and international human rights mechanisms are more likely to “stick” in countries where the bureaucracy is already capable of implementation and national law reflects the international agreement.¹⁹ Some Type II Partnerships (such as PP10) were overly centered on particular individuals within an agency, who, when they moved along, were unable to transfer their enthusiasm to new people. The implications are that there needs to be support for capacity-building for weaker agencies, domestication of international law, and that commitments need to be made at the institutional level.
- **DOMESTIC CONSTITUENCIES:** Where there are strong non-government actors likely to demand a functioning international mechanism, there is more likelihood of national-

level compliance.²⁰ In many countries, civil society lacks interest, capacity, or an enabling environment to demand compliance with international commitments. On the other hand, constituencies can work to capture, discredit, or stop the implementation of a pledge-and-review initiative. The OGP and recent UNFCCC processes have required participatory processes for members wishing to develop pledges and commitments.

Well-designed pledge-and-review mechanisms will take into account the difficulties with national-level implementation and ideally provide support needs of multiple stakeholders, including beneficiaries of the commitment.

LESSON 3: MEANS OF REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE

In the case of Rio+20 national government pledges, the range of proposals for an accountability framework run from self-reporting to a universal periodic review. Regardless of the particular form, proponents of sustainable development commitments should consider which factors will strengthen actors’ abilities to demonstrate compliance²¹ with their own commitments. Design elements of an accountability framework enabling compliance include:

- **PERIODICITY OF PLEDGES:** One criticism of some Type II Partnerships was that they only had one pledge period and did not allow for members to move beyond their initial pledges (as in the case of PP10). Without multiple generations of pledges, many initiatives missed an opportunity for iterative reform.
- **MONITORING OF PERFORMANCE:** Options for monitoring range from self-reporting to independent, regular third party evaluation of compliance and performance. Such a role might be played by non-governmental actors or by a proposed United Nations body such as the Sustainable Development Council or an Ombudsman for Future Generations. The CGI has been successful in serving in a large part as a monitoring process, and the OGP has developed an innovative network of evaluators who can be called on to evaluate members’ performance.
- **MECHANISM FOR NON-COMPLIANCE:** At one extreme (the OECD Investment Committee), formal complaints can be brought to a dispute resolution mechanism which can bring official findings on host-country corporations. Often such findings may be followed by capacity-building for government, or for government and non-governmental actors in combination. At the

other end of the spectrum, there are very soft “enforcement mechanisms” for non-compliance with self-determined commitments. The CGI does not invite back those members who pledge and fail to meet their own commitments.

- **PREDICTABLE FUNDING:** A number of the Type II Partnerships burned brightly and then flagged when their sole funder withdrew from the partnership (as in the case of the PP10). In others, such as the OGP, uncertainty about long- and medium-term funding has led some to question the longevity of the initiative.
- **AUTONOMY AND STATUS OF THE SECRETARIAT:** Two successful initiatives (in terms of both longevity and outcomes), the CGI and the PCFV, had an active secretariat that continued to develop new partnerships and strategies, rather than being tied to a single measurement framework.

The range of these options is indeed still available in a proposed accountability framework emerging from Rio+20 and proponents would be amiss to not consider each in turn. While some, such as review and monitoring mechanisms are likely to engender a great deal of discussion, the experience of past initiatives suggests that others, such as predictable funding and strong secretariat roles are more clearly linked to outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR A FUTURE COMPENDIUM OF COMMITMENTS

It is likely that the Compendium of Commitments concept will become increasingly solid. As governments consider the exact means of implementation of the Compendium (or Compendiums), they should consider the full set of potential arrangements around three goals:

- **MAKE PLEDGES AMBITIOUS**
 - Make pledges reflect globally agreed-upon goals strengthening and universalizing global norms or should aim to solve collective action problems.
 - To be suitably ambitious, commitments to strengthen and universalize global norms should be systemic (rather than marginal reforms). Where they attempt to solve collective action problems, they should be scaled to the challenge of the environmental problem.

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- Make pledges specific, time-bound, measurable, and verifiable: The accuracy of reports on commitments can be monitored by parties other than the reporting party.
 - Support domestic constituencies' participation in the design of pledges and commitments.

■ **SUPPORT IMPLEMENTATION**

- Provide support to strengthen weak agencies so that they can effectively implement commitments.
- Ensure that commitments are made at the institutional, rather than the individual level.
- Continue support for non-governmental counterparts beyond the pledge phase into the review phase.

■ **SUPPORT A STRONG REVIEW AND COMPLIANCE PROCESS**

- Make the pledge-and-review process periodical.
- Examine the range of options for compliance and performance monitoring from self-reporting to independent, regular third party evaluation.
- Consider a range or combination of actors to carry out monitoring.
- Consider a range of enforcement mechanisms, from publication of independent findings to denial of exclusive membership in an initiative.
- Secure predictable funding for pledge-and-review initiatives.
- Allow the secretariat of the initiative enough autonomy to meet evolving needs of members.

ANNEX: DESCRIPTIONS OF SELECTED PLEDGE-AND-REVIEW AGREEMENTS

Clinton Global Initiative (CGI): 2005-Present

The Clinton Global Initiative creates partnerships among the public and private sectors internationally to address and resolve global challenges.

<http://www.clintonglobalinitiative.org/commitments/>

Who is committing?

The attendees of the CGI meetings are global leaders from the private sector, public sector, international organizations, and civil society organizations.

To whom are they committing?

The participants of CGI commit to one another publicly.

What is the type of commitment (money, result, partnership, conduct)?

The participating members commit to specific actions around key areas of Economic Empowerment, Education, Environment & Energy, and Global Health.

What is the nature of the commitments (ambition, scope, and scale)?

The commitment criteria are that they must be new, specific, and measurable and must seek to address a major global problem. They can be at any scale (local, national, or international) and are not measured against any criteria of their contribution to global targets. The period for completion is determined by the committing party.

What is the review process (monitoring)?

Members develop a timeline and plan of implementation with self-defined indicators and self-report on how well they complied with their own commitments. In addition, CGI performs independent monitoring of the commitments.

What are the compliance mechanisms (accountability)?

Participating members who fail to meet their commitments are not invited back to the next major meeting.

Cancun Agreements: 2010-Present

The Cancun Agreements are a series of agreements under the auspices of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change which contain a series of voluntary and non-binding commitments on actions to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions and encourage adaptation actions.

<http://cancun.unfccc.int/>

Who is committing?

National governments.

To whom are they committing?

Other national governments.

What is the type of commitment (money, result, partnership, conduct)?

The Cancun Agreements are non-legally binding agreements. They identify specific mitigation actions for different countries (Annex I and Annex II countries).

Provides incentive structure (finance and technology transfer and technical assistance) for developing countries to develop along a low-emission pathway.

What is the nature of the commitments (ambition, scope, and scale)?

The Cancun agreements set out a goal of preventing a rise in global temperature above more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels. UNEP²² and other independent initiatives such as the Climate Action Tracker²³ have evaluated the ambition and scale of existing commitments and whether such commitments would meet the scale of the problem. Additionally, the subsequent Durban Agreements have created some mechanisms to review and, theoretically, update national commitments.²⁴

What is the review process (monitoring)?

Agrees that developing countries would report those actions once every two years via the U.N. climate change secretariat, subjected to their domestic monitoring, reporting, and verification (MRV).

What are the compliance mechanisms (accountability)?

Nationally Appropriate Mitigation Actions seeking international support will be subject to international MRV.

Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) Investment Committee: 2004-Present

The OECD Investment Committee is partially responsible for implementation of the Declaration on International Investment and Multinational Enterprises.

http://www.oecd.org/document/24/0,3746,en_2649_34863_2373464_1_1_1_1,00.html

Who is committing?

National governments make commitments, but the committee also serves as a forum for discussion of issues with business, labor, NGOs and other groups.

To whom are they committing?

National governments (OECD members) commit publicly to one another.

What is the type of commitment (money, result, partnership, conduct)?

The OECD has developed the Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises directing responsible business conduct in the field of international investment and services that are addressed by government to multinational corporations (MNCs). Each country has a National Contact Point (NCP) which oversees and hears complaints on MNC violations of guidelines.

What is the nature of the commitments (ambition, scope, and scale)?

The Guidelines for Multinational Enterprise provide voluntary principles and standards for responsible business conduct in areas such as employment and industrial relations, human rights, environment, information disclosure, combating bribery, consumer interests, science and technology, competition, and taxation. There is no measure of the aggregate measure of the adoption of these guidelines by OECD members.

What is the review process (monitoring)?

NCPs report on national compliance with Guidelines. In cases of violation, The Investment Committee assists NCPs with carrying out their activities and makes recommendations on how they can improve their performance.

What are the compliance mechanisms (accountability)?

The Investment Committee cannot pronounce on the question whether a particular company has or has not respected the Guidelines. In the case of non-observance no sanction can be imposed upon a member country or company. The Committee, can however make findings on a national system which can lead to corrective assistance through national contact points.

Open Government Partnership (OGP): 2010-Present

The OGP is a multilateral organization which hosts member state commitments to improve transparency, participation, and accountability in international affairs.

<http://www.opengovpartnership.org/ogp-participation>

Who is committing?

National governments.

To whom are they committing?

National governments commit publicly to one another and to their respective citizens.

What is the type of commitment (money, result, partnership, conduct)?

National governments commit to take concrete actions, change policies, or implement technological platforms to improve open government. Additionally, members commit to using a participatory procedure to arrive at their commitments.

What is the nature of the commitments (ambition, scope, and scale)?

OGP members must embrace a high-level declaration of open government and develop a national plan, with at least one commitment reflecting one of the “Grand Challenges” (e.g. “Increasing Public Integrity” through control of corruption, campaign finance reform, or press freedom). These commitments are reviewed through a networking mechanism of experts who approve the suitability of the commitment to the Grand Challenge.

What is the review process (monitoring)?

The OGP has a steering committee made up of governments and civil society. The steering committee maintains a secretariat which, in turn, maintains a database of approved analysts—members of civil society or international organizations who may carry out periodic reviews on compliance with national commitments.

What are the compliance mechanisms (accountability)?

At this time, publication of self-reporting and independent reporting is the only accountability mechanism.

Partnership for Principle 10: 2002-2010

The Partnership for Principle 10 (P10) was a Type II partnership launched from the WSSD in Johannesburg, building from the successes of the civil society-only Access Initiative to improve national implementation of Principle 10 of the Rio Declaration at the national level.

<http://www.wri.org/project/principle-10>

Who is committing?

National governments, non-governmental organizations, and intergovernmental organizations commit. Originally, private sector institutions were to join, but most withdrew after some time.

To whom are they committing?

The members of PP10 were committing publicly to one another and to the general public.

What is the type of commitment (money, result, partnership, conduct)?

Developing country governments and NGOs pledged to undertake policy reform and capacity-building domestically to support the implementation of Principle 10 in their countries. Wealthier governments (UK) and IGOs supported independent civil society assessment, collaboration, and supported international promotion of Principle 10.

What is the nature of the commitments (ambition, scope, and scale)?

Commitments are additional, time-bound, specific, and measurable, with time-frames determined by governments. None committed to second round. There were no requirements for ambition. As a consequence, many commitments were focused on very small, concrete actions. While many of these were quite new and important for many member countries, they were rarely system-wide policy changes. (Exceptions included Hungary's establishment of environmental libraries and Uganda's passage of a Freedom of Information Act.)

What is the review process (monitoring)?

Commitments and achievements following commitments were posted by the Secretariat on the PP10 website.

What are the compliance mechanisms (accountability)?

There was no specified theory of change linking transparency (posting of commitments and achievements) to revision and compliance.

Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV): 2002-present

The PCFV assists developing countries to reduce vehicular air pollution through the promotion of lead-free, low sulphur fuels and cleaner vehicle standards and technologies. The Partnership aims to support developing countries in their efforts to improve fuel and vehicle technologies that reduce air pollution. The Partnership builds on current trends and efforts in the development of fuel and vehicle technologies. The Lead Elimination campaign for lead free petroleum has been particularly successful.

<http://www.unep.org/transport/pcfvc/corecampaigns/campaigns.asp#lead>

Who is committing?

National governments, non-governmental organizations, private sector actors, and intergovernmental organizations commit.

To whom are they committing?

The members of the Partnership were committing publicly to one another and to the general public.

What is the type of commitment (money, result, partnership, conduct)?

The PCFV provided a forum for the phase-out of lead and sulphur in fuels. A significant part of this partnership was the transfer of technology (between private sector actors, NGOs, and academics) and regulatory practices (between governments).

What is the nature of the commitments (ambition, scope, and scale)?

The PCFV had, among its goals, the complete phase out of leaded fuels globally. This campaign was particularly successful, with the near elimination of lead worldwide. With such clear goals and cross-sectoral buy-in, the commitments were readily achievable and verifiable with appropriate scientific staff.

What is the review process (monitoring)?

The Partnership has specifically avoided naming-and-shaming individual countries or organizations, but sought to provide technical assistance. It has been able to track progress through a combination of tracking legislation and policy, as well as verifying through blood level testing. On the other hand, it did track lead fuel-additive manufacturers around the world and has targeted assistance to problematic manufacturers.

What are the compliance mechanisms (accountability)?

The Partnership (led by UNEP) established a two-pronged approach with technical assistance to governments complemented by support to civil society groups, which it helped to support with scientific and political training.

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2. According to the some assessments, “No quantitative analysis of the aggregate impact of the Johannesburg partnerships has been conducted, as well as very little evaluation of the individual environmental impact of partnerships.” <http://environment.yale.edu/blog/2012/01/22/the-road-to-rio20-learning-from-johannesburg-in-the-wake-of-durban/>
3. This is reflected in the mandate of the “Ad Hoc Working Group on The Durban Platform.” Available at: http://unfccc.int/files/meetings/durban_nov_2011/decisions/application/pdf/cop17_durbanplatform.pdf
4. As an aside, the term “voluntary” itself raises flags about the credibility of such commitments. It is unlikely that there will be any commitments which are forced or involuntary, making the term redundant. Given this, the only other reason for the term would be that those committing have no intention of carrying out their pledges. In this case, the term should be struck from the Zero Draft.
5. The zero draft “lacks vision, ambition, balance and action oriented language and does not reflect all the concerns and positions of the G77 and China, especially in terms of the means of implementation and the full integration of the three pillars of sustainable development.” (Benmehidi, Mourad. 2012. Statement on Behalf of the Group of 77 and China. <http://www.uncsd2012.org/rio20/content/documents/678g77.pdf>) See also: Banuri, Tariq. “Zero Draft – Zero Ambitions.” Rio+20 NGO Platform SDIN. (<http://rioplus20ngo.com/forum/topics/zero-draft-zero-ambitions>) and Zukang, Sha. 2012. “Initial Consultations on the Zero Draft Document: Closing Remarks.” <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/usg/statements/zero-draft-consultations-closing.html>
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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Joseph Foti is a Senior Associate at the World Resources Institute, which serves as the international secretariat for the Access Initiative (TAI). For more information on TAI, please visit <http://www.accessinitiative.org> or contact access@wri.org. Contact: jfoti@wri.org

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