

**Save the Children management response to
MEC Mid Term Review Recommendations and Donor Partner management responses.**

The following is the consolidated response from Save the Children (SC) on the MEC Mid Term Review and the Donor Management response to it. We welcome the MTR report, the recommendations within it and the donor response to it. We also appreciate the opportunity to provide a response. SC has been closely involved in the development and implementation of this program for over 4 years and is committed to its continuing success.

SC recognise the challenges in succinctly writing findings in any report and particularly in reporting on complex programs with multiple stakeholders and thank the reviewers for their efforts in highlighting key challenges for the program. It is reassuring to note that the recommendations reflect a number of issues which had been identified internally prior to the review.

In response to the recommendations put forward in this report, SC commits to the following:

- SC will present a new management plan which addresses the concerns raised in section 5.2.4 and 5.3 of the MTR to donor partners by the end of April 2015.
- SC will develop a new MEC Strategy 2015 to 2018, including strategic priorities, an implementation plan, a revised theory of change and log frame, delivery mechanisms, staffing needs and relevant sustainability/transition plans. We note the request for a robust strategy development process with quality technical input together with the request for this to be completed by July. We will present an outline strategy development process to the Steering Committee to agree the most suitable timeline for completion.

Save the Children Management response to MTR Recommendations/ DP management response

SC broadly supports the recommendations of the review and the Donor Partners response to them.

Recommendation 1: A decision on future donor support.

SC acknowledges and welcomes the swift response to recommendation 1 by donor partners. The commitment of donor partners to extend the program with a further grants round allows the program to refocus and plan appropriately. As noted above, Save the Children understands that this is contingent on an approved management plan and so commits to providing this to donor partners for consideration within agreed timeframes.

Recommendation 2: Agreement on the purpose and thematic refocusing of the MEC.

SC agrees with a redefined focus, thematically and geographically, and that the broad agenda requires further prioritisation. This will be elaborated as part of the strategic plan. MEC will build on its strategic engagement in the policy dialogue/sector reform, with a more focused agenda.

Recommendation 3: A revised management plan.

Save the Children acknowledges that more clarity is needed in the governance and management structure. SC welcomes the opportunity to present a revised management plan to donors by the end of April 2015.

Recommendation 4: Donor contract management.

SC welcomes the opportunity to build on what has been a mutually beneficial working relationship to date. SC agrees to revisit the ToR for the Steering Committee and will prepare input to an update

to the governance structure that was presented at the October 2014 steering committee meeting to reflect the requirements of the new strategic plan. SC welcomes further discussion on how effective co-ordination between MEC and the donors can be maintained through informal and regular communication or updates, whilst expecting that these do not become operational or detailed management discussions. SC appreciates that the DP engagement will be more at the strategic level and commits to clearer and ongoing high quality management by SC.

Recommendation 5: Revised theory of Change and logframe.

We welcome the opportunity to develop a new implementation plan with a revised theory of change and logframe based on the revised strategy. SC will develop this for submission to the Steering Committee in a mutually agreeable timeframe. The new strategic plan will clarify how the MEC is able to refocus on a new direction while still supporting current partners. It will be important for donors and SC to be clear on the expected pace and results around the new strategy.

Recommendation 6: Staff strengthening for MEC.

SC welcomes the recommendation for increased technical staffing and support for the MEC's refocused strategic direction. MEC will bring to the steering committee for approval a staff resourcing proposal to support the delivery of the new strategy. SC welcomes the additional support that might be available through the donor partners. Noteworthy is that all parties have agreed that a priority appointment will be that of an Education expert to join the MEC management team.

Recommendation 7: MEC strategy.

The new strategy and implementation plan will identify approaches to achieve the revised purpose of MEC. This strategy will be developed and submitted to DPs within agreed timeframes.

Recommendation 8: MEC's role in policy discussions.

We agree that MEC should build on achievements to date in undertaking its role as a convenor and facilitator of civil society inputs into policy discussions with government.

Recommendation 9: Education in Emergencies.

SC agrees MEC should retain the facility to provide emergency assistance to CSOs and will explore how to better integrate this in overall programming during the strategic plan development process.

Additional point by DPs: new ways of working for DPs.

SC appreciates the DP position on compliance and risk appetite, and understands the potential challenges around these when working in ethnic areas so welcomes discussions on how operational systems can meet these requirements. SC agrees that a balance needs to be struck between ensuring that effective compliance and monitoring systems are in place to minimise risk, without being overly burdensome to local partners, and will work with donor partners with this aim in mind.