

# Strengthening UNAIDS Secretariat to deliver on the global AIDS targets and position AIDS in the post-2015 development agenda



**US\$ 48 million**

Cost reductions in the biennium 2012–2013

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**20%**

Reduction in general operating costs

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**10%**

Decrease in staffing

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**70%**

Staff in field

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# Getting results

## Meeting the 2015 global AIDS targets and positioning AIDS for the post-2015 era

The 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, adopted by the UN General Assembly in June 2011, with its set of 10 global AIDS targets, signalled the international community's commitment to the achievement of all the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), in particular Goal 6 (combat HIV/AIDS, malaria and other diseases). The Declaration recognized the importance of rapidly scaling up efforts to integrate HIV and AIDS prevention, treatment, care and support with efforts to achieve those Goals. It also recognized UNAIDS leadership role on HIV policy and coordination, and its support to countries.

At the same time, the UNAIDS vision of getting to zero—zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, zero AIDS-related deaths—has rallied political leaders and activists around an objective that has moved from aspiration to commitment to action.

In line with an evolving epidemic, the UNAIDS Secretariat is pursuing a strategic and proactive change agenda to better support countries in the final push to reach the MDGs and the global AIDS targets of the 2011 Political Declaration, and to position the organization to deliver most effectively on the post-2015 development agenda.

The organizational realignment has focused on three overarching objectives:

- **Aligning resources—human and financial—with the UNAIDS vision and corporate priorities.**
- **Strengthening staff deployment and skills for an increased country focus.**
- **Demonstrating value for money and achieving cost effectiveness.**

In order to maximize impact, the strategic realignment has aimed to reinforce the UNAIDS Secretariat as an organization 'fit for purpose' in the global response to AIDS. This has meant a constant focus and emphasis on two key areas: **organizational strengthening** through the optimal deployment of staff and resources, including championing staff development and innovation; and **enhancing the business model** for greater effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

Underpinning the organizational realignment is the UNAIDS vision of getting to zero and the UNAIDS 2011–2015 Strategy, which continue to guide and inspire the work of the Joint Programme, as well as previous strategic initiatives that provided an enabling foundation for implementing broader change.

# Building on a solid foundation

The organizational realignment of the UNAIDS Secretariat builds on three initiatives—in strategic human resources management, administration and organizational design—that provided the necessary foundation to become more effective, efficient and responsive in its support to countries. The realignment was also informed by several independent evaluations that helped guide the UNAIDS Secretariat in advancing change across all areas of its work.

-  **A UNAIDS Human Resources Strategy**, launched in late 2010, outlines the vision and principles for the development of a workforce that is diverse, mobile, able to work across disciplines and ultimately meets UNAIDS' current and future staffing needs. The Strategy, which integrates all areas of human resources management, is underpinned by the UNAIDS competency framework that sets the corporate standards for performance by defining the values and core competencies that staff must demonstrate through their work. Implementation of the Strategy is supported by a Human Resources Advisory Committee, a consultative body including staff from across the UNAIDS Secretariat and the Staff Association, that reviews human resource policies before they are issued.
-  **A single administrative system**, implemented in 2011, has strengthened the provision of administrative services. Prior to 2011, the UNAIDS Secretariat operated within two different frameworks of staff regulations and rules (the World Health Organization and the UN Development Programme), requiring the use of separate management systems. Today, all UNAIDS staff have a UNAIDS contract and are governed by a single set of staff regulations and rules, ensuring equitable, fair and consistent treatment at country, regional and headquarters levels. A single enterprise resource planning (ERP) software has been put in place for all staff, an integrated staffing table developed and a single budgeting and expenditure system deployed that has significantly improved financial and human resources management.
-  **A functional review of headquarters**, the regional support teams and country offices was carried out to align human and financial resources with the UNAIDS vision and changing needs. It analysed staffing needs and organizational design against the vision and national epidemics and responses, as well as collected and assessed external benchmarks; all helping to ensure staff and resource deployment reflect a country's environment and needs.

# Organizational strengthening

As a knowledge-based organization, the most valuable resource of the UNAIDS Secretariat is the expertise, skills, experience and motivation of its staff. Several initiatives have been undertaken to foster a dynamic and adaptable workforce through the promotion of learning and staff development programmes and improving performance management. To better support the needs of staff, the UNAIDS Secretariat has modernized its human resources policies to promote greater organizational effectiveness, including revised policies on flexible working arrangements and performance management.

## Optimal deployment of staff and expertise

- The UNAIDS Secretariat has now evolved from a largely headquarters-based organization to a field-based one with the majority of its staff located in country and regional offices. It has achieved its staffing target of 820 staff and a 30:70 headquarters to field ratio respectively; two objectives that were set at the start of the realignment in July 2011.
- In July 2011, the UNAIDS Secretariat had 904 staff, with 321 staff located at headquarters and 583 staff in the regional, country and liaison offices. As of 1 April 2014, there were 817 staff holding fixed-term or temporary appointments: 236 were located at headquarters—continuing the trend of reducing overall headcount in Geneva—and 581 staff in the regional, country and liaison offices. This represents a 10% decrease in staffing since the beginning of the realignment.
- The headquarters structure has been streamlined to strengthen focus and accountability against the global AIDS targets and the UNAIDS Secretariat's core functions, while retaining its capacity for normative work in all key areas.
- A strengthened field presence and structure is in place, particularly in high impact countries, through additional personnel and reprofiling of functions. In the field, a number of structural changes were also made to increase operational efficiency. Approaches to deliver results more cost-effectively at country level included consolidating some offices, creating additional multi-country offices, locating UNAIDS focal points in the offices of the resident coordinator (RC) and placing greater reliance on national officers.

- The realignment has been facilitated by a Mobility Policy that ensures the UNAIDS Secretariat's workforce is revitalized through the timely placement of qualified staff in positions in all regions. In the last two mobility exercises, 153 staff took on new positions.
- Some 60 Job Profiles have been revised, primarily in the field, in areas such as outreach and advocacy, strategic information, investment and efficiency, and human rights and gender equality, to better respond to programmatic priorities.
- The role of the UNAIDS head of office at country level has also been reprofiled to place a stronger focus on leadership, advocacy and delivery of results—also reflected in a new title of UNAIDS Country Director (UCD).

### **Increased focus on staff development and performance management**

- A new Performance and Learning Management (PALM) system and Performance Management Policy were launched on 1 April 2014. This marked an important milestone in the implementation of the Human Resources Strategy by aligning individual work objectives to the higher-level objectives of the UNAIDS Secretariat.
- The new Performance Management Policy guides staff in aligning their work with the expected results of their office and the targets and strategic functions of the organization. It highlights the continuous aspect of performance management, detailing the responsibilities of both staff and supervisors in improving UNAIDS' performance culture. The policy clarifies the processes, timelines and responsibilities of staff and managers, resulting in a harmonized and streamlined approach.
- The PALM system is an online tool that staff can access from any location to enter and evaluate work and learning objectives, and it facilitates access to learning by having all resources in one place. In the lead up to the launch of PALM, mandatory training ensured that all staff were able to use the new system to enter their objectives on the go live date.
- A new approach to induction for all newly appointed UCDs, introduced in early 2014, represents a major innovation. It equips UNAIDS heads of office with the knowledge, tools and competencies required to manage a country office and prepares them to demonstrate high-level advocacy, policy and technical leadership. The three-phase programme includes distance learning sessions, a face-to-face workshop at headquarters and a community of practice to ensure on-going support for new UCDs.

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In addition to the UCD induction programme, several management and leadership development courses are being made available to staff, such as leadership and coordination skills in the context of the UN Country Team and a customized leadership course for women; programmes for management and leadership development are especially important at a time of organizational change. UNAIDS has partnered with the UN System Staff College (UNSSC) to develop and deliver these and other training initiatives. Additional staff learning opportunities are made available so that staff in all functions and locations can benefit.
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On International Women's Day 2014, the UNAIDS Secretariat marked one year of implementing its Gender Action Plan. An annual progress update and an infographic were shared with all staff to provide a detailed overview of the gains in meeting workplace gender objectives and areas that require further attention. The action plan has galvanized a movement on gender within the UNAIDS Secretariat in two ways: first as an accountability platform that provides concrete measures to close the gender gap, and second as a vehicle to nurture a supportive culture for all staff.
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The UNAIDS Secretariat continues to make important advances across many of the Gender Action Plan's targets and its strategic focus areas, including in increasing the number of women UCDs—from the baseline of 27% in February 2013 to 35% in April 2014. As part of the Gender Action Plan, a pilot mentoring programme for women was launched in April 2014 with 15 mentees and 15 mentors to contribute to career development of women staff in the UNAIDS Secretariat. A new initiative entitled "Spotlight on UNAIDS Women", introduced on International Women's Day 2014, celebrates the diversity of women staff by featuring inspirational profiles.
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The human resources policy base has been strengthened. As part of the efforts on staff well-being, a new Flexible Working Arrangements Policy was launched in November 2013.
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The UNAIDS Secretariat continues to lead two innovative system-wide initiatives to support staff members and families, UN Plus and UN Cares.
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Throughout the realignment, careful efforts have been made to put in place specific measures that maintain the human face of the UNAIDS Secretariat and that support career transition for staff members. Adhering to the "human face" principle has ensured that staff can continue to focus on their work while understanding and contributing constructively to the change process.

## Innovation as an enabler of change

- To support staff in their daily work, to foster innovation and to reduce operating costs, several key components of the UNAIDS Secretariat's IT Strategy were implemented in 2013 and early 2014. This included the establishment of an offshore Field and Remote Support Division in Nairobi and an IT governance structure to ensure that IT-related decisions are aligned with the overall UNAIDS Strategy and business needs.
- The UNAIDS Secretariat is moving to cloud-based technology, a shift that will enable innovative ways of working. In 2013, the IT Governance Committee reviewed and endorsed a public cloud solution that best responds to the requirements of the UNAIDS Secretariat and will ensure business continuity, increase collaboration and strengthen country support. The recommendation built on a thorough technical, functional and legal analysis, testing in headquarters and the field, consultations with an in-house IT Advisory Group and benchmarking with Cosponsors and other UN partners. An implementation plan was developed outlining a phased approach to deploy cloud-based services in early 2015.
- New tools to facilitate data driven management have been utilized. A comprehensive system of high-level key performance indicators (KPIs) and a dashboard were further improved in 2013 to provide senior management with a systematic overview of organizational performance. The KPIs dashboard offers regular updates of the latest data on financial and programmatic performance of the organization. The launch of an online tool called iTrack in 2013 has also streamlined the quality compliance check of purchase registrations for goods and services acquired by the UNAIDS Secretariat, thereby simplifying what previously was a paper-based process, saving staff time and resources.

# Enhanced business model

As part of the organizational realignment's focus on enhancing effectiveness, efficiency and accountability, the UNAIDS Secretariat is reducing costs while maintaining the quality of support provided to countries and partners. The realignment provided an opportunity to rethink how resources are used and allocated, combined with added emphasis on maximizing resources for greater impact. As a result, general operating expenses were reduced by 20% in the 2012–2013 biennium compared to 2010–2011.

## Greater reporting and results-based planning

- The UNAIDS Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) is the instrument that translates and operationalizes the UNAIDS Strategy into action and maximizes the coherence, coordination, transparency and impact of the UN response to AIDS by combining the efforts of the 11 Cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat in a single framework. At all levels, budgets are allocated against activities linked to the global AIDS targets, and particularly focused on the 38 high impact countries that account for the majority of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths worldwide. Providing the whole of the results chain from inputs through to impact, the UBRAF enables Member States and other stakeholders to hold UNAIDS accountable.
- Resource allocations and disbursements under the UBRAF for 2014–2015 have been linked to performance based on financial implementation, leveraging of resources and quality and timeliness of reporting as the main criteria. Measurement of performance and adjustments of plans have become more systematic under the UBRAF with progress against approved budgets and workplans assessed annually through a peer review process involving all Cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat.
- The UBRAF is aligned with resolution 67/226 on the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) of UN operational activities and has incorporated the principles of the QCPR, including emphasis on strengthening results-based planning and budgeting, enhancing coherence and coordination, improving joint work and accountability at country level and increasing support to RC offices. UNAIDS has doubled its funding to the RC central budget in the 2014–2015 biennium.
- The launch of a Joint Programme Monitoring System (JPMS) web-based tool in 2012 has enabled reporting at country, regional, global organizational and thematic levels to be captured in a uniformed way for the first time. The reporting module of the JPMS makes it possible to generate reports by individual components (e.g. by

country and region) and by a particular output, outcome, goal or thematic area. In 2013, following one year of implementation and user feedback, the JPMS tool was made simpler with more reporting functionalities, as well as improvements to the quality of data analysis and visualization.

- The UBRAF, with further streamlined indicators in 2014, has led to improved reporting by the Cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat at country, regional and global levels, increased transparency, accountability and access to information.
- Following a request by the PCB in June 2013, the UNAIDS Secretariat embarked on a midterm review of the UBRAF to take stock of work and lessons learned in implementing the UBRAF during the first two years.

## Strengthened internal controls and risks-based management

- UNAIDS has a modest but catalytic core budget (US\$ 485 million for the 2014–2015 biennium), relying exclusively on voluntary contributions and representing less than 1% of overall funding for HIV. Despite increasing demands and the addition of an 11th Cosponsor, UN Women, the budget of the Joint Programme has remained at the same level since 2008, representing a decrease in real terms.
- The adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) in 2012—an international best practice in public sector financial accounting and reporting—has improved the quality and comparability of financial reporting and, ultimately, the governance of the Joint Programme. UNAIDS received a clean audit opinion on its 2012 and 2013 IPSAS-compliant statements. An online course on IPSAS was made available to assist staff in becoming acquainted with the various IPSAS provisions and standards and their application across the UN system.
- The UNAIDS Secretariat continues to benefit from its adoption of a single administrative system in 2011, which has harmonized and simplified administrative and operational processes. The human resources management model has been improved and has resulted in faster work processes, increased use of updated self-service of the ERP system, and further delegation of administrative work to the WHO Global Service Centre.
- Increased attention has been given to risk management, through the launch of a policy and governance structure for enterprise risk management (ERM) in December 2013. The UNAIDS Secretariat is developing a comprehensive and structured risk management strategy that will enable it to assess and mitigate risks and to mainstream risk management in all business processes. The development of a risk registry and a how-to guide for ERM are underway to assist managers and staff with implementation.

## Greater efficiency and cost consciousness

- By streamlining headquarters and implementing secretariat-wide efficiency measures, cost reductions of US\$ 48 million (or 8% compared to the 2010–2011 biennium expenditure) have been achieved in the 2012–2013 biennium.
- Proactive steps to re-negotiate contracts with service providers have resulted in tangible savings for the UNAIDS Secretariat. A new flat-rate plan for headquarters mobile phones negotiated in 2013 is leading to significant savings while increasing the level of mobile services. This and other initiatives, such as a self-booking travel tool and on demand printing, provide smarter ways of doing business.
- Strict enforcement of the UNAIDS Secretariat travel policy, the establishment of travel ceilings and the increased uptake of the self-booking travel tool ensured achieving and even exceeding the travel reduction target of 25% for the 2012–2013 biennium—and efforts to further reduce travel costs continue to be pursued. Beyond saving resources, reducing air travel also contributes to minimizing CO2 emissions.
- Internal oversight of resources is being improved through the introduction in early 2014 of quarterly updates. Customized for each office, the updates provide detailed financial and staffing data to support managers in planning their activities.
- An emissions reduction strategy has been developed and a sustainability task force established to support the implementation of the strategy. The UNAIDS Secretariat is one of the earliest UN organizations with an organizational emissions reduction strategy in place. Greenhouse gas emissions continued to be tracked and consolidated in 2013 as part of the UN system-wide Greening the Blue initiative.
- The UNAIDS Secretariat's participation in interagency mechanisms, such as the High Level Committee on Management and the UN Development Group, facilitates the sharing of change initiatives. Transferring such knowledge and best practices supports the efforts for UN reform and system-wide coherence—responding directly to QCPR recommendations and supporting the development of the second generation of Delivering as One.
- The value of the lessons learned from the Joint Programme's unique approach has been recognized by the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board and by the UN Economic and Social Council in its resolution E/2013/L.32 on the Joint Programme, adopted in July 2013. The resolution cites the Joint Programme as a useful example to be considered for the UN to enhance strategic coherence, coordination and results-based and country-level focus in the post-2015 period.



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