UNAIDS EDITORIAL STYLE GUIDE

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UNAIDS' style is based on the editorial style of the World Health Organization (WHO) given in the *WHO style guide.*[1] The *UNAIDS terminology guidelines*[2] give full details of UNAIDS' preferred terminology. See also the United Nations Editorial Manual Online.[3] The United Nations Terminology Database (UNTERM)[4] is a wide-ranging database that should be consulted for specialist terminology and nomenclature. The general rule at UNAIDS is to use the first spelling given in the latest edition of the *Concise Oxford English dictionary* (COED).

This brief guide is intended to give the basic outlines of the way UNAIDS texts should be written and edited and to show exceptions from the style of WHO. Many of the examples given below are from the *WHO style guide*, which should be consulted for more complete information, along with the other sources of information noted above.

Information on formatting and logo usage and templates for various types of publications are available on the UNAIDS Brand Builder web pages.[5] When editing a report it is important to consult the relevant graphic design templates and note any necessary formatting and layout changes that need to be made.

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[1] http://intranet.who.int/homes/whp/publishingwho/contentdevelopment/housestyle.shtml.

[2] https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2015/2015_terminology_guidelines.

[3] http://dd.dgacm.org/editorialmanual/index.htm.

[4] https://unterm.un.org/UNTERM/portal/welcome.

[5] unaids.org/en/brandbuilder.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CREDITS

UNAIDS publications carrying a UNAIDS logo do not have an acknowledgements section and no acknowledgements should be given. A UNAIDS document without a logo may acknowledge funding given for a project and non-UNAIDS personnel.

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

Use abbreviations and acronyms sparingly. A few abbreviations and acronyms are so widely used in our work (e.g. AIDS, HIV and CD4) that they do not need to be defined, but the majority do. An abbreviation or acronym should be defined in parenthesis. For example:

> The spokesperson for the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) …

Once defined, abbreviations and acronyms should be used throughout the text, but should be redefined in figures and tables. In longer publications, abbreviations and acronyms can be defined at first use in each chapter. Abbreviations should not be used in headings or captions. Generally, there is no need for a list of abbreviations. However, if the number of abbreviations used in a publication is large enough to warrant a list of abbreviations, the list appears before the list of references.

When a short form of a name of an organization is to be used subsequently, the short version should first be defined. For example:

> The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund) is an international financing organization …

Abbreviations and acronyms are normally used without the definite article. For example:

> the members of UNESCO, the programmes of WHO

Abbreviations and acronyms are written without full stops. For example:

> UNDP, not U.N.D.P.

Do not use "i.e." or "e.g." other than at the beginning of bracketed text; write them out in full in all other occurrences. Neither of these abbreviations need to be defined. For example:

> … and tools to monitor the flow of AIDS funding (e.g. National AIDS Spending Assessments).

AGES

Young people are people who are 15–24 years, not 15–24 years old.

Young people are young people, not youth.

BULLET POINTS

The hierarchy of bullets is the following:
- First square bullets.
  - Then em dashes.
    o Then open circles.

CAPITALIZATION

Use capital letters sparingly and consistently. Some words, of course, require initial capitals simply because of their position in the text: for example, the first word in a sentence, heading or subheading. However, when in doubt, do not capitalize.

Always use initial capitals for proper nouns: the full, formal, exact names of people, institutions and organizations (and the titles of their staff), recognized geographical names (but not more general geographical descriptions), historical events and trade names.

For book titles, capitalize only the first word and proper nouns. For example:
World report on violence and health, *Concise Oxford English dictionary*

Note that more in-depth guidance on references is given in the *WHO style guide.*

Give parts of a document or a book in lower case, unless they are numbered: the first five chapters, the annexes, the figure(s), but Chapters 1–5, Annex 2, Figures 1–3.

Do not capitalize the first letter after a colon unless the word is a proper noun. For example:
The situation in some countries is disturbing: life expectancy at birth is actually falling.

Use government, but Government of South Africa.

The word "secretariat" is capitalized if referring to a specific secretariat. For example:
     UNAIDS Secretariat

The term "Member States" (of both the United Nations and WHO) is capitalized. However, when referring to other organizations, the term "member states" is not capitalized.

UNAIDS headquarters, regional support teams, country offices and Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026: End Inequalities, End AIDS (and thereafter Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026), are capitalized as shown.

Capitalization of regions

Regions with "south", "north", "east" and "west" in their name are generally capitalized, while those with "southern", "northern", "eastern", "western" and "central" are not. For example:
     North Africa, South-East Asia, but northern Africa, central Asia, western Europe

CHAPTERS

Chapters are not numbered, unless the publication is a flagship publication.

COSPONSORS

There are 11 UNAIDS Cosponsors (note the capital C).

The order in which the UNAIDS Cosponsors are listed—for example in a UNAIDS publication or on an official letterhead—is determined by two factors, following guidance provided by the United Nations Office of Legal Affairs: the Cosponsor's category within the overall structure of the United Nations and the founding date of each body or organization within its category. The three overarching United Nations categories are:

1. United Nations funds and programmes: Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), World Food Programme (WFP), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women).[6]

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[6] Note that, according to UNTERM and the United Nations Editorial Manual Online, a hyphen should be used in the name UN-Women in official United Nations documents.

2. United Nations specialized agencies: International Labour Organization (ILO), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), World Health Organization (WHO).

3. Bretton Woods institutions: the World Bank.

Therefore, the Cosponsor order is as follows:
1. UNHCR (1950)
2. UNICEF (1953)
3. WFP (1963)
4. UNDP (1966)
5. UNFPA (1969)
6. UNODC (1997, formerly the United Nations International Drug Control Programme, 1991)
7. UN Women (2010)
8. ILO (1919)
9. UNESCO (1945)
10. WHO (1948)
11. World Bank (1944).

CURRENCIES

Give an amount of money before the currency name when the name is written in full, but after the abbreviation or symbol when that is used. Where an abbreviation is a letter or letters, or a combination of a letter or letters and a symbol, there is a non-breaking space between the abbreviation and the amount. Where a symbol is used to represent the monetary unit, there is no space between the symbol and the amount. For example:

10 000 manats, US$ 6000, €200, £19.95

Currency units and the appropriate abbreviations are given in UNTERM. Do not use three-letter currency codes (EUR, GBP, USD, etc.).

DATES

Dates should be written as follows:

17 May 2011, a meeting held on 12–15 September 2011 (or held from 12 to 15 September 2011), a meeting held on 12 and 13 September 2011 (for just two days), a meeting held on 31 October–3 November 2011 (or held from 31 October to 3 November 2011).

ENDING THE AIDS EPIDEMIC

Ending the AIDS epidemic is understood to be the reduction in HIV incidence and AIDS-related deaths to levels that no longer represent a major health threat to any population or country. UNAIDS is working towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals.

USE	DON'T USE
Ending the AIDS epidemic	End HIV
Ending the epidemic	Ending HIV
Ending AIDS	The end of HIV
End the AIDS epidemic	Eliminate HIV
End the epidemic	Eliminate AIDS
	Eradicate HIV
	Eradicate AIDS

ELLIPSIS

Use an ellipsis to mark an omission in a quotation. There is a space each side of the ellipsis. For example:

> "Empowering adolescents in their health development, including healthy sexual and reproductive health practices … will enable them to enter adulthood with stronger overall capabilities, better equipped to make informed choices for themselves and their communities."

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

The UNAIDS Executive Director (no hyphen is used in Executive Director) is Winnie Byanyima (spelled as such).

FIGURES

Figures should be self-contained and understandable without reference to the rest of the report. All abbreviations used in a figure should be defined under the figure.

The text in figures should be edited. Axis labelling should be descriptive and units should be given in parenthesis.

Note that the source should be given as a full reference, not a reference number.

All figures should be cited in the text, as, for example, "see Figure 1" (not Fig. 1).

FOOTNOTES

Footnotes should be used to give additional information, not for references. Footnote indicators are superscript numbers, positioned after any preceding punctuation. Endnotes may be used instead of footnotes if there are more than a few footnotes in a document; the indicator for an endnote is the same as for a footnote.

HYPHENS AND DASHES

Hyphens

UNAIDS style follows that of WHO, which is to use hyphens after prefixes sparingly, in contrast to the advice given in the COED.

The following prefixes are not hyphenated when used in a full word:

ante- (e.g. antiretroviral)	non- (e.g. nongovernmental)
co- (e.g. Cosponsor)	over- (e.g. overreport)
contra- (e.g. contraindicate)	post- (e.g. postnatal)
inter- (e.g. intercountry)	pre- (e.g. prenatal)
intra- (e.g. intraregional)	re- (e.g. reinfect)
micro- (e.g. microeconomics)	sub- (e.g. subcategory, but sub-Saharan)
multi- (e.g. multidrug)	under- (e.g. underestimate)

See Table 3 of the *WHO style guide* for a more complete list.

Some words are always hyphenated, such as:

capacity-building
decision-maker/making
policy-maker/making
side-effect
stock-out
well-being
life-saving

Use a hyphen when:

- A compound adjective is followed by a noun.
- A noun is used as an adjective.
- An adverb might be mistaken for an adjective.

For example:
   up-to-date information, but information that is up to date; long-term solution, but solution for the long term; high-quality care; breast-milk substitutes; health-care worker, but high-quality health care is important; harm reduction services.

In general, do not use a hyphen if the first word of a compound adjective is an adverb. For example:
   recently available information, newly infected patients

For further details on the use hyphens, see Chapter 5 of the *WHO style guide.*

En dashes (or en rules)

En dashes are used in ranges of numbers or in circumstances in which "and" or "to" may be used. For example:
   1–3 September (note that if an event is held only on two days we would write 1 and 2 September)
   Cost–benefit analysis
   London–Brighton race

En dashes should not be used for parenthetical punctuation.

Em dashes (or em rules)

Em dashes—used for punctuation—are used like this. Do not put spaces on either side of an em dash.

LISTS

Putting information in a list can be helpful and aid readability, but lists should be used sparingly, otherwise they lose impact.

Begin each item with a capital letter, and end it with a full stop. For example:
   Midterm reviews aimed to serve four key purposes:
   ■ Reaffirming and strengthening leadership and commitment to achieve the targets and commitments in the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS.
   ■ Strengthening accountability, ownership and transparency regarding strategic data on progress towards targets and commitments.
   ■ Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of national programmes by using the midterm review as a springboard for the development of national HIV investment cases.

- Promoting and applying the principles of shared responsibility and global solidarity regarding HIV responses and identifying strategies to ensure long-term sustainability.

For a list in run-on text, indicate the separate elements with lower-case letters in parenthesis after an initial colon and separated by semi-colons. "For example: (a) text; (b) other text; and (c) more text."

Numbered list

Lists can also take the form of a numbered list. An Arabic number is followed by a full stop, and the end of the item is followed by a full stop. For example:

Midterm reviews aimed to serve three key purposes:
1. Reaffirming and strengthening leadership and commitment … on HIV.

2. Strengthening accountability, ownership and transparency … targets and commitments.

3. Improving the effectiveness and efficiency of … investment cases.

MONTHS

If a figure or table is lacking space and needs to have the names of months abbreviated, use the following short forms:

Jan., Feb., Mar., Apr., May, Jun., Jul., Aug., Sept., Oct., Nov., Dec.

NAMES

Names of countries and places

Use the short forms of the names of countries given in WHO's list of Member States and Associate Members of WHO[7] and in Annex 1 to the *WHO style guide*. The names that should be used in some cases differ from common usage, and names change from time to time, so take care to check the list. The list also gives the accepted capital cities of the countries.

In a list of country names, the names are presented alphabetically. For example:

Algeria, South Africa and the United Republic of Tanzania

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[7] http://intranet.who.int/homes/whp/publishingwho/contentdevelopment/memberstates.shtml.

The accepted English version of a place name should be given. For example:
    Geneva, not Genève

On the first use of a city name, add the country name after it in parenthetical commas. For example:
    Paris, France, thereafter Paris

A list of place names is given in Annex 2 to the *WHO style guide*.

Names of organizations

Use the names of organizations with their original spelling, capitalization and punctuation. For example:
    Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
    Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
    Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
    Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Names and titles of people

Titles of people, such as Mr and Ms, are written without a full stop. Professor and Dr should not be used unless the person in question has requested that it be used or if it is politically expedient to use them. There is no need to define the abbreviations Mr and Ms. The title "H.E." (or variants thereof) should not be used.

Job titles of people should be used on first mention only. For example:
    Executive Director Winnie Byanyima, thereafter Ms Byanyima, but the Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima, met with ...

If no job title is given, the full name without a title is given first. For example:
    Joan Smith, thereafter Ms Smith

Initials are written out with full stops and no spaces. For example:
    P.M. Charlton

Chinese personal names are traditionally written by placing the single-syllable family name first. For example:
    Hu Ching-Li

If for reasons of confidentiality a person's real name is not to be used, use a pseudonym in this form, which should always have a first and family name at first use:
    John Smith (not his real name) said ...

NUMBERS

Spell out numbers zero to nine and use figures from 10 onwards, unless the number is the start of a sentence. Two-word numbers at the start of a sentence are hyphenated: twenty-four.

Where a number consists of more than four digits, do not insert a comma, but use a space before every set of three digits, counting from the right or left of the decimal point. For example:

    275 000 inhabitants, per 100 000 population, 0.234 56, but page 1743

Use numbers in front of denominators, except at the beginning of a sentence, in which case the number should be spelled out. For example:

    Five million at the start of sentence, but 5 million

Write fractions in words, not figures, and do not hyphenate them unless the fraction is adjectival. For example:

    Two thirds of the patients showed symptoms of the disease, but two-third majority

Ranges of estimates are given in square brackets. For example:

    The number of annual AIDS-related deaths worldwide is steadily decreasing from the peak of 2.1 million [1.9 million–2.3 million] … and 40% [37–45%] were receiving HIV treatment by 2014.

Mixed constructions are acceptable: for instance, 330 000–4 million. Repeat the initial "million" in number ranges: 1.9 million–2.3 million.

Use figures and the percentage symbol to express percentages, not "per cent", except when starting a sentence with a percentage. Leave no space between the figure and the symbol. For example:

    The incidence rate increased by 20% between 1994 and 1997.
    Vaccination coverage ranged between 80% and 90%; the target was 95–100%.

Add a space around symbols in equations: $n = 12$.

OXFORD COMMA

Do not use an Oxford comma (e.g. the second comma in "apples, oranges, and pears") unless to not do so would cause confusion.

PEOPLE

Use the word "people" rather than "those" and "them". Programmes for people should be focused on people, not targeted on people. People access services or are on treatment, they don't receive services or treatment.

POSSESSIVE APOSTROPHE

Write UNAIDS', not UNAIDS's.

QUOTATIONS

Use a comma, not a colon, to introduce a quotation. For example:
   Mr Smith added, "That could take a long time."

Quotation marks

Punctuation should go inside the quotation marks.
   "There are 7 million elephants," said John Smith. "I would like to meet all of them."

Use double quotation marks for brief direct quotes, and single quotation marks only for direct quotes within brief direct quotes. Never use emphasis or scare quotes, since they can confuse the reader. To cast doubt on the accuracy of a term, use "so-called": so-called soft data, not "soft" data or 'soft' data.

REFERENCES

Full details on how to present bibliographic references are given in the *WHO style guide*. Indicators for numbered references are given as italic numbers in parenthesis. If there is a range of references to be noted in the text, use an en dash; if two references are cited, use a comma followed by a space.
Note that references are indicated by endnotes, not footnotes.
For example:
   According to WHO, UNODC and UNAIDS target-setting guidelines *(16–18)*, the availability of fewer than 100 syringes per person *(19, 20)* …

SPACES

Use only single spaces after punctuation.

SPELLING

UNAIDS uses the first spelling of a word given in the COED, with some exceptions. The COED uses the -ize suffix. For example:
  equalize, not equalise

Note, though, that the COED uses -yse, not –yze. For example:
  analyse, not analyze

Both the *WHO style guide* and the United Nations Editorial Manual Online have some exceptions to the spellings given in the COED. In order of preference, for the exceptions use the preferred WHO spelling, followed by the preferred United Nations spelling. If no exceptions are given in the *WHO style guide* or the United Nations Editorial Manual Online, use the COED spelling.

Some of the exceptions are the following:
  amfetamine (WHO)
  fetus (WHO)
  nongovernmental (WHO)
  socioeconomic (United Nations and WHO)
  sulfur (WHO)

See also the section on hyphens above.

SOURCE

The source of data given in a figure or a table is given below the figure or table caption, or below the figure or table, but consistently within a publication, as follows:
  Source: Staveteig S, Wang S, Head SK, Bradley SEK, Nybro E. Demographic patterns of HIV testing uptake in sub-Saharan Africa. DHS Comparative Report No. 30. Calverton, MD: ICF International; 2013.

However, if the source is to UNAIDS data, you should cite the source as follows:
  Source: UNAIDS 2020 estimates.

TABLES

Keep the titles and column headings of tables as simple and brief as possible. When relevant, include the places and dates covered in the title. Give units of measurement or multiplication factors in column headings, rather than repeating

them in the data columns, and ensure that there is no possibility of misinterpretation. Every column should have a heading, and no column should contain any blanks. Use en rules or abbreviations where data are missing (such as NA for "not applicable" or "not available", or ND for "not determined"). In text, give an initial capital to the word "table" when referring to a specific table, but use lower case when referring to generic tables.

For example:

Table 1, Tables 15–19

Table 1 shows the mortality rate.

The tables are based on the latest data.

Tables should be numbered sequentially throughout the text, with the numbering continuing into the annexes.

Footnotes to a table should be indicated by lower-case italic letters and should be placed under the table.

TITLES

Titles of laws

Laws take initial capitals and are not italicized. For example:

Anti-Homosexuality Act

Titles of the political declarations

Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS "Global Crisis – Global Action". This is the title of the 2001 declaration of the United Nations General Assembly (adopted as resolution A/RES/S-26/2). The subheading "Global Crisis – Global Action" is included in the original resolution, but is rarely used. Use:

Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, or

2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS, or

2001 Declaration of Commitment (after the longer title has first been used)

Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS. This is the title of the 2006 declaration of the United Nations General Assembly (adopted as resolution A/RES/60/262). Use:

Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, or

2006 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS, or

2006 Political Declaration (after the longer title has first been used)

Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS. This is the title of the 2011 declaration of the United Nations General Assembly (adopted as resolution A/RES/65/277), made at the 2011 High-Level Meeting on AIDS. Use:

Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Intensifying Our Efforts to Eliminate HIV and AIDS, or

2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, or

2011 Political Declaration (after the longer title has first been used)

Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: on the Fast Track to Accelerating the Fight against HIV and to Ending the AIDS Epidemic by 2030. This is the title of the 2016 declaration of the United Nations General Assembly (adopted as resolution A/RES/70/266). However, for UNAIDS reports, use:

Political Declaration on Ending AIDS, or

2016 Political Declaration on Ending AIDS

Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030. This is the title of the 2021 declaration of the United Nations General Assembly (adopted as resolution A/RES/75/284). Use the full title in UNAIDS reports, or 2021 Political Declaration (after the longer title has first been used).

Note that titles of plans, programmes, declarations, etc., should be given with the the initial letter of each word capitalized (except for articles, prepositions, etc.) and not in italics, even if the title is also the title of a report. For example:

African Union's Roadmap on Shared Responsibility and Global Solidarity for AIDS, TB and Malaria Response in Africa

Titles of reports

Titles of publications that are mentioned in running text should be in italics, with the initial letter and any proper nouns capitalized :

2020 UNAIDS *Report on the global AIDS epidemic*

UNAIDS

The full official name of UNAIDS is:
    Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS

The full name only rarely needs to be written out.

WE

Avoid the use of the word "we".

ZERO

The UNAIDS vision:
    Zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths.

Or if displayed stacked:
    Zero new HIV infections.
    Zero discrimination.
    Zero AIDS-related deaths.

ANNEX. MISCELLANEOUS POINTS

"Among", not "amongst".

"At the national/government level", not "at national/government level".

Antiretroviral medicines, not antiretroviral drugs. Medicines are used for treatment, drugs are not: "she is on treatment", "he injects drugs".

Data are plural. Datum is singular.

Demographic and Health Surveys.

"Gay men and other men who have sex with men" (do not just use the term "men who have sex with men".)

Global North/Global South.

"In the light of", not "in light of".

"More than": use for numerical values, not "over". For example:
   "He had to walk more than 10 km to reach the …" not "He had to walk over 10 km to reach the …"

People Living with HIV Stigma Index (this is not italicized).

People are "on treatment" or "accessing treatment", not "receiving treatment".

Representatives of an organization are "representatives of", not "representatives from".

"Same-sex sexual relationships", not "same-sex relationships".

That/which. Use "which" for non-restrictive relative clause and "that" for restrictive relative clauses:
   I bought a new dress, which I will be wearing to Jo's party.
   I was wearing the dress that I bought to wear to Jo's party.

That is, if it needs a comma before it, the word should be "which".

"While", not "whilst".