

UPDATE ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE REVISED OPERATING MODEL OF THE JOINT PROGRAMME

Report finalized by the PCB Bureau

Additional documents for this item: Update on the restructuring of the UNAIDS Secretariat (UNAIDS/PCB (57)/CRP2)

Action required at this meeting—the Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

- *Take note* of the update on the implementation of the revised operating model of the Joint Programme (UNAIDS/PCB/57/25.31);
- *Welcome* that UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, and WHO will be "lead" Cosponsors and that ILO, UNESCO, UN Women, WFP and the World Bank will be "affiliate" Cosponsors;
- *Request* the Programme Coordinating Board Bureau to:
 - a) Finalize, no later than January 2026, the terms of reference for a Working Group on UNAIDS's transition and integration into the United Nations System, including the elements set out in UNAIDS/PCB/57/25.31, and present it for the PCB's inter-sessional approval;
 - b) Establish a Working Group on UNAIDS's transition and integration into the United Nations System immediately after approval of its terms of reference, as set out in UNAIDS/PCB/57/25.31;
 - c) Mandate the Working Group to provide an interim report, with preliminary recommendations for UNAIDS's transition and integration, through the Bureau, for the PCB's consideration and decision-making at the 58th PCB meeting in June 2026;
 - d) Mandate the Working Group to provide final recommendations for UNAIDS's transition and integration, through the Bureau, for the PCB's consideration and decision-making no later than the 59th PCB meeting in December 2026;
- *Request* the PCB Bureau to organize quarterly engagements of the Working Group with PCB Stakeholders;
- Recalling decision point 6.2c from the 55th PCB meeting and decision points 4.1 and 4.2 from the Special Session of the PCB in October 2025, *agrees to* postpone the establishment of the UBRAF Working Group to the next cycle of the UBRAF beyond 2027;

Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions: *none*

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Introduction

1. This paper responds to decision point 8.6 from the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) meeting in June 2025 which requested the Executive Director “to define a review process of the revised operating model by the 57th PCB in December 2025, in consultation with the Cosponsors and PCB stakeholders, and undertake that review by June 2027 at the latest to inform the PCB’s decision making, subject to ECOSOC decisions, on the further transition of the Joint Programme within the wider UN system to sustain global progress towards ending AIDS as a public health threat.”
2. Towards fulfilment of that decision point, the Executive Director has convened a group to provide inputs for the drafting of this report, which included representatives from Cosponsors, civil society and the Executive Office of the United Nations Secretary-General. The document was finalized by the PCB Bureau, fulfilling the request for consultation with the Cosponsors, represented in the Bureau by the Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO), and the PCB stakeholders, represented by the three elected officers from Member States and civil society representatives.
3. In seeking coherence between the PCB decisions on reform and transition and the ongoing discussions on the UN80 Initiative, this report presents an overview of the inclusive process that will allow the Board to make informed, evidence-based and final decisions by the 59th PCB meeting in December 2026 on the full integration of the Joint Programme into the broader United Nations (UN) System and, where relevant, engaging all stakeholders, as per the PCB decisions taken in June and October 2025, including communities of people living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV.
4. The paper is structured into three parts: (a) process, (b) key content and analysis, and (c) milestones and timelines.

Process

5. UNAIDS strategy, policy and implementation plans have a long tradition for drawing on the diverse multistakeholder constituencies that have built and that constitute the global HIV response. This practice has delivered broad ownership and common agreement on direction, objectives and necessary safeguards across constituencies. It is not only in the spirit of the HIV response to continue this practice, but it is also imperative to retain the trust of communities of people living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV and countries most impacted by the AIDS pandemic.
6. Effective and inclusive governance are critically important for the PCB to make credible, timely and accountable decisions regarding the future of the Joint Programme, and to safeguard the global and national HIV responses. This section outlines governance arrangements, which are designed to ensure independence, legitimacy, technical rigour, and ownership across Board constituencies in overseeing the continuation of the review process.
7. A PCB Working Group¹ will be formed by the PCB to lead the development of the plan to guide the further transitioning and integration of the Joint Programme into the UN

¹ As set out in the Modus Operandi of the Programme Coordinating Board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), para 28, “The PCB may establish subcommittees and ad hoc working groups to assist it in carrying out its functions.” See:

Development System and other relevant partners such as civil society, governments and other entities. The Working Group would be chaired by a globally recognized independent figure (e.g. a former UN Under Secretary-General or a respected global health leader and/or a global leader living with HIV). The members of the Working Group will be representative of the composition of the PCB in accordance with established practice.

8. The PCB Bureau will be tasked by the PCB with the establishment of the Working Group which would report to the PCB through the PCB Bureau. The UNAIDS Secretariat will provide administrative and technical support to the Working Group.
9. The PCB will request the Bureau to finalize the terms of reference of the Working Group after seeking input from all relevant stakeholders. Some of the proposed areas to be covered by the terms of reference could include the following aspects:
 - a) **Propose governance and institutional arrangements.** Examine and provide recommendations on the future governance model and decision-making structures with representation of civil society, and institutional arrangements for the Joint Programme's integration and transition within the UN System.
 - b) **Safeguard programmatic mandate and impact.** Evaluate how core programmatic functions will be maintained and strengthened post-integration. Those functions would include: stewardship and coordination of the global HIV strategy; accountability and support to countries to produce and report on progress; sustainability; stakeholder engagement, specifically of communities living with and affected by HIV; government ownership; civil society leadership; and human rights-based approaches and human rights programming; and the analysis and dissemination of data.
 - c) **Ensure operational continuity and human resource transition.** Oversee the development of strategies to ensure operational continuity, effective human resource planning, and the well-being of Secretariat staff throughout the transition process.
 - d) **Review financial sustainability and resource mobilization.** Advise on mechanisms for financial sustainability, including closure costs, future funding models, and resource mobilization to support ongoing and future UN engagement in HIV response efforts.
 - e) **Promote inclusive and transparent stakeholder engagement.** Ensure that the perspectives of all relevant stakeholders—including Member States, civil society, affected communities and cosponsors—are meaningfully incorporated throughout the review and integration process, including in all decision-making processes.
 - f) **Recommend a timeline for the transition and integration of the Joint Programme.** Advise on a timeline with key milestones for the transition and endline for the integration of the Joint Programme, including the determination of the Joint Programme's integration into the UN and beyond.
10. The working group is time-limited, and its tenure will end upon submission of its final report to the PCB Bureau.
11. It is proposed that the PCB Bureau be tasked by the PCB to develop and finalize the terms of reference for the Working Group for the PCB's approval and that it subsequently establishes the Working Group by the end of January 2026. It will present an interim report to the PCB in June 2026 and final recommendations by the end of October 2026 to enable decision-making by the Board in November or December 2026.

12. Stakeholder briefings and engagement sessions will be organized every quarter to ensure continuous interaction with PCB stakeholders, starting March 2026.
13. The PCB Bureau will develop a costed workplan and will present it to the PCB for approval.

Key content

14. This section outlines the key considerations and questions that would be studied by the Working Group in preparation of the preliminary report (in June 2026) and final recommendations (in October 2026) for the transition and integration of the Joint Programme. They are divided into four defined sections: (a) programmatic, (b) operational, (c) political and governance, and (d) financial, including future resource mobilization.

Programmatic key questions

15. As considered by the PCB at its meeting in June 2025, a significant reduction of approximately 60% in the core funding base is projected for 2026. In view of this anticipated reduction, the Board approved a 2026 Workplan and Budget in October 2025 of US\$ 63–80 million. In line with decisions made by the Board for further transformation of the Joint Programme, it is crucial to consider a range of programmatic questions that will determine the effectiveness, inclusivity and sustainability of the global HIV response moving forward.
16. The following questions are intended to guide a thorough examination of how core programmatic functions, stakeholder engagement, global accountability, technical support, human rights-based approaches, human rights programming, community-led responses and community systems, greater national ownership during transition and thereafter, and knowledge management will be maintained, preserved and strengthened throughout the transition, and how risks across each of these areas will be mitigated.
17. Those considerations are central to ensuring that the integration process not only preserves but enhances the impact of the Joint Programme's work at global, regional and country levels. In addition, a capacity analysis needs to be undertaken for each of the points listed below.
 - **Theory of change & integration framework.** What is the theory of change guiding UN integration? How does it shape recommendations for effective transition and how does it identify and mitigate against risks associated with transition?
 - **Mandate & governance.** How to safeguard the elements of UNAIDS's mandate as defined by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)? Those elements include, for example: global leadership; achieving and promoting global consensus on policy and programmatic approaches; monitoring trends and ensuring that the appropriate and effective policies and strategies are implemented at country level; promoting broad-based political and social mobilization to respond to HIV; and strengthening the capacity of national governments to develop and implement comprehensive strategies. Where should key capacities and mandates reside, post-transition? What legal arrangements are required to secure those functions, avoid fragmentation, and preserve the meaningful engagement of people living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV and of civil society in global AIDS governance and decision-making, as well as the continued oversight of the UN's leadership role in the HIV response?
 - **Global stewardship & accountability.** How will global stewardship of the Global AIDS Strategy and UN General Assembly Political Declaration on AIDS be maintained after integration? Who will lead the coordination function in a credible, inclusive and neutral way that retains the confidence of all stakeholders, including communities of

people living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV; governments; civil society; donors; and implementers? What custodial arrangements will ensure regular updates, target setting and progress reviews, as well as ongoing support to ensure human rights-based approaches and support for community leadership frame all aspects of the HIV response, with sustained political commitment? How can the health and other sectors be strengthened to play a leadership role in delivery of HIV services for everyone in need?

- **Data, monitoring & reporting.** Which entity or entities will support countries in measuring progress toward the Sustainable Development Goals and 2030 AIDS targets; compile global multi-sectoral data and evidence, including social science, community-led and other relevant evidence; and publish progress summaries? Will it have a mandate to request reports from countries? How will the optimal management of several entities working on data, monitoring and reporting be achieved?
- **Stakeholder & system integration.** What are the implications of integration for communities of people living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV; governments; civil society; academia; researchers; faith-based groups; and financing partners, including the Global Fund and the private sector? How will integration align with the UN Development System, regional bodies (e.g. Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention), and communities and civil society, and their respective transformation plans and timelines?
- **Continuity & technical support.** How will programme and service continuity be maintained during and after integration? What technical support models will be used, and how will dedicated, ringfenced resources for key populations and vulnerable groups be guaranteed? Which entities within the Joint Programme currently provide this support, and what measures can strengthen capacity and effectiveness going forward, in the context of evolving country needs and priorities?
- **Leadership and advocacy on human rights, gender equality & building inclusive and stigma-free responses.** How will efforts to achieve progress on human rights, stigma and discrimination, decriminalization and gender equality be implemented, monitored, financed and safeguarded during and after integration? Noting an external context of regression on human rights and gender equality, what are the risks both for specific populations and for this work as a whole, and what capacities and mechanisms are essential to mitigate those risks and ensure leadership, advocacy and progress towards an inclusive, rights-based, gender-transformative global HIV response?
- **Powering community leadership.** Noting the limited progress on community leadership under the Global AIDS Strategy and Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF), which is being compounded by a challenging environment for community-led organizations, how can actions required for community leadership in the HIV response be prioritized, in order to ensure progress within an integrated model? Actions should be planned for in line with key areas listed in the Global AIDS Strategy, as presented for approval at the 57th meeting of the PCB, which include:
 - institutionalizing community representation at all levels of the HIV response;
 - reform of laws, policies and regulations that limit the ability of community-led organizations to participate in all aspects of HIV responses;
 - adequate resourcing for all components of community responses and enactment of effective social contracting mechanisms to support this;
 - sustainability and scale up of existing community-led service delivery systems, including innovations;

- enabling and resourcing community-led monitoring and research, and their systematic inclusion in planning and decision-making processes using data;
 - support for youth leadership and for the capacity-strengthening, resilience and preparedness of community-led organizations, particularly those from under-represented and under-served populations; and
 - support for community engagement in sustainability planning processes, and for the integration of community services and advocacy as part of national systems.
- **Country presence integration.** How can the UNAIDS Secretariat country presence be integrated into the UN Resident Coordinator system, and what alternate models exist outside the Resident Coordinator system, including Cosponsors, for maintaining critical support to countries across core functions such as leadership and advocacy; convening and coordination; accountability through data, targets and strategy; and community engagement? What lessons can be learnt from the independent evaluation of the placement of HIV advisers in Resident Coordinator offices?
 - **High-profile initiatives & innovation.** What criteria and decision-making processes will guide the future of key initiatives—such as the development of HIV response sustainability roadmaps, the Global HIV Prevention Coalition, the Global Partnership on Stigma and Discrimination—during integration? What actions or arrangements might be required to implement the decisions? What roles can civil society and governments play in sustaining and strengthening these initiatives?
 - **Knowledge retention, transfer & data preservation.** How and where will institutional knowledge and data be retained and remain accessible as public goods, post-integration? What options exist for transferring knowledge, including Board-level discussions with any hosting entity?

Operational issues and transitional arrangements

18. As the transition and integration process advances, operational issues related to human resources and organizational continuity become paramount. The following questions are designed to guide a focused assessment of how human resource planning, staff well-being, regulatory compliance, and inter-agency mobility will be addressed. Ensuring a smooth transition for staff and affiliates, while upholding duty of care and operational efficiency, is essential for maintaining organizational integrity and supporting the workforce throughout the change process.
- **Compliance, well-being & operational efficiency.** What comprehensive plan and timeline will allow for compliance with UN staff regulations and rules, staff well-being, and operational efficiency? How can the critical functions (related to the global coordination) be financed under the "new" integrated model? What can be done to support this?
 - **Inter-agency mobility & transfers.** What options and modalities exist for inter-agency transfers to other UN Development System entities?
 - **Human resources planning and duty of care.** How will human resource planning and duty of care be ensured for staff and affiliate staffing?²
 - **Staff protections & transition arrangements.** How will human resources and staff protections be managed, including documenting roles and contracts, offering redeployment pathways, defining separation arrangements, and agreeing on the approach and sequencing of human resource measures in consultation with staff representatives? And will specific protections be considered for staff who are living with HIV, including protecting access to essential medical care?

² Affiliate staff include staff working with UNAIDS but on contracts using other modalities e.g. UNV, JPO etc.

- **Managing human resource-related obligations post-integration.** What are the options for managing the remaining human resource-related obligations of the Secretariat, including legal cases, separation and pension payments, and accountability, post-integration?
- **UN System alignment.** How can the UN System-wide approach/frameworks be used to address the transition and integration phase?

Political and governance issues

19. The transformation of the Joint Programme from its current form raises fundamental questions about political leadership for an inclusive and multisectoral HIV response, institutional arrangements, and governance structures. The following questions are intended to guide a critical examination of how decision-making processes, accountability mechanisms, and stakeholder engagement will be structured to ensure effective oversight and strategic direction. Addressing these governance and political considerations is essential for maintaining coherence, legitimacy and inclusivity throughout the transition, while safeguarding the multisectoral and participatory nature of the global HIV response.
- **Decision-making processes & pathways.** What decision-making processes and pathways (including PCB, ECOSOC and, possibly, the boards of Cosponsors) would need to be considered in the process of transition and integration?
 - **Governance models & structures.** What governance model should be adopted for the UN's multisectoral leadership role after the integration of UNAIDS into the broader UN System? Are there existing models that could be explored (Human Rights Council Social Forum, for example)? Could a global hub/hosted partnership host an annual forum that reports to bodies such as ECOSOC and the boards of Cosponsors?
 - **Meaningful engagement of communities & civil society.** How will the UN ensure that communities of people living with, affected by, or at risk of HIV, and civil society continue to be an integral part of any future UN governance structure that oversees the global HIV response, on par with current governance modalities of the Joint Programme, as set out by ECOSOC? How will the UN entity or entities hosting the new governance structure need to strengthen their existing provisions for community engagement, in order to ensure that communities and civil society engage in their Boards, including within its decision-making functions as per current arrangements, and how will any risks or barriers be mitigated against? How can UN entities, and the wider UN System, learn from the experience of UNAIDS in terms of strengthening community and civil society engagement going forward?
 - **Future coordination facility.** Is a global hub or coordination facility needed in the future? If yes, how will it be resourced? How would it be structured differently from current set-up?
 - **Reputational risk management.** How will reputational risks be managed regarding delivery of previously agreed commitments, and any adverse impacts associated with the withdrawal/ diminished capacity of the various components of the Joint Programme, including the Secretariat?
 - **Monitoring, oversight & safeguarding integration.** What mechanisms will be used for monitoring, oversight and safeguarding integration?
 - **Risk management systems.** What systems will be in place for risk management and monitoring, so that full transparency is guaranteed in this process and safeguards are in place to protect the HIV response?

Financial issues, including future resource mobilization

20. Effective financial planning and sustainable resource mobilization are critical to the success of the integration and transition process. The following questions are intended to guide a comprehensive review of how closure costs will be managed, how future funding models will be established, and how financial obligations and assets will be handled. These considerations encompass donor engagement, asset management, legal and contractual requirements, audit implications, and the development of funding strategies to support ongoing operations, technical assistance, increasing government readiness, and civil society engagement. Addressing these issues will be essential to ensure financial continuity, accountability, and the long-term viability of the UN's support to the global HIV response.
- **Legal & contractual obligations.** What legal or contractual obligations must be fulfilled before integration and what steps are needed to initiate closure?
 - **Cost estimates & fiduciary review.** What steps shall be taken to produce transparent, comparable cost estimates, and to commission independent fiduciary reviews?
 - **Asset management & sustainable infrastructure.** What is the process for stock-taking of physical assets, data systems, infrastructure, and facilities, and what criteria and decision-making processes should guide their future use, transfer, sale or other disposition?
 - **Funding closure & securing donor commitment.** How will the cost of the integration process be funded, and how will donor buy-in or commitment for funding activities and integration beyond 2026 be secured? What steps are to be taken to negotiate binding donor letters of commitment?
 - **Managing ASHI assets & liabilities.** What would be the options for managing ASHI assets and liabilities for existing and retired Secretariat staff?
 - **Separation & transfer costs.** What are the cost implications for separation and inter-agency transfer of existing staff?
 - **Donor agreements.** Which donor funding agreements would need to be renegotiated, if any?
 - **Future funding models.** If there is a future coordinating entity, what should be the future funding model? What should the future funding model be for the Resident Coordinator footprint or for alternate models of country presence?
 - **Funding support for civil society & HIV response.** What funding models could be envisioned to maintain support to civil society, including key and priority populations, and the HIV response that is currently provided by the Joint Programme?
 - **Funding for technical support & country integration.** What funding models could be envisioned to maintain technical support to countries and to facilitate country-level integration?

Milestones and timelines

21. The transition of the Joint Programme into the broader UN system is a complex, multi-phase process that requires careful planning, inclusive consultation, broad ownership across diverse constituencies, and evidence-based decision-making. To ensure transparency, accountability and effective stakeholder engagement, the PCB will establish a structured timeline with key milestones. These milestones are designed to guide the review, consultation and decision-making processes, leading to further integration of the HIV response within the UN System and beyond. The following section outlines the PCB Bureau's proposals for tentative major phases and critical decision points that will shape this transition.

- **End of January 2026.** Finalization and approval of the Terms of Reference, and establishment, of the PCB Working Group to lead the development of the transition and integration plan for the UNAIDS integration into the UN Development System.
 - **Early February 2026.** Inaugural meeting of the Working Group to define its activities, workplan, milestones and stakeholder engagement plan, including steps for evidence gathering, scenario development, risk assessment, stakeholder consultations, implementation strategy, and funding strategies.
 - **March 2026.** First multistakeholder briefing on the transition and integration plan (including civil society, donors, programme countries and other stakeholders).
 - **April/May 2026.** Consultation with the CCO at Heads-of-Agencies level at the biannual meeting.
 - **June 2026.** Presentation of an interim report by the Working Group, through the Bureau, to the PCB, with preliminary recommendations to be considered by the PCB.
 - **October 2026.** Finalization of report, with final recommendations, by the Working Group.
 - **October/November 2026.** CCO review of final recommendations.
 - **November-December 2026.** Board decision on the future of the Joint Programme (possibly to be followed by ECOSOC consideration).
22. These milestones are designed to ensure a structured, inclusive and accountable process, allowing for transparent, responsible and evidence-based decisions on the future of the Joint Programme and its integration within the UN System.

Proposed decision points

The Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

23. *Take note* of the update on the implementation of the revised operating model of the Joint Programme (UNAIDS/PCB/57/25.31);
24. *Welcome* that UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, and WHO will be "lead" Cosponsors and that ILO, UNESCO, UN Women, WFP and the World Bank will be "affiliate" Cosponsors;
25. *Request* the Programme Coordinating Board Bureau to:
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 - d) Mandate the Working Group to provide final recommendations for UNAIDS's transition and integration, through the Bureau, for the PCB's consideration and decision-making no later than the 59th PCB meeting in December 2026;

26. *Request* the PCB Bureau to organize quarterly engagements of the Working Group with PCB Stakeholders;
27. Recalling decision point 6.2c from the 55th PCB meeting and decision points 4.1 and 4.2 from the Special Session of the PCB in October 2025, *agree to* postpone the establishment of the UBRAF Working Group to the next cycle of the UBRAF beyond 2027;

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