

THEMATIC SEGMENT AGENDA

Beyond 2025: Countering health inequities through sustaining the HIV response, human rights and harm reduction for people who use drugs

Key objectives and focus of the meeting:

This thematic segment will explore how the Joint Programme and Member States can advance the implementation of the Global AIDS Strategy (2026–2031) by addressing the structural barriers that continue to undermine progress for people who inject/use drugs.

The discussion will focus on:

- The central role of human rights, legal and policy reform, and decriminalization in enabling access to HIV and harm reduction services.
- Ensuring sustainable harm reduction, including through domestic finance and integration into primary health care, while preserving community led models.
- The importance of community leadership, particularly networks of people who use drugs, in designing, delivering and monitoring effective services.
- Addressing the inequalities and lack of opportunities faced by women, young people, people in prisons, displaced populations and others who use drugs.
- Identifying actions needed for a sustainable, equitable, and rights affirming future HIV response.

Moderator: Daria (Dasha) Ocheret, Adviser, Community Led Responses, UNAIDS

09:00 – 09:45 Opening dialogue and keynote addresses:

The opening dialogue and keynote segment will set the strategic and political context for the meeting, reaffirming the centrality of human rights, public health, and community leadership in advancing effective HIV responses for people who use drugs. The session will bring together global leadership, Member State perspectives, and representatives of communities most affected by HIV and drug policy, underscoring the importance of shared responsibility and multisectoral action.

- **Winnie Byanyima**, Executive Director, UNAIDS
- **Dr Mathume Joseph Phaahla**, Deputy Minister of Health, South Africa
- **Monica Kathina Juma**, Executive Director, UNODC
- **Anton Basenko**, Executive Director, INPUD

09:45 – 10:00 Setting the scene; presentation of background paper highlights (data)

- **Mary Mahy**, Team Lead, Data and Evidence, UNAIDS
- **Umunyana Rugege**, Team Lead, Communities & Human Rights ai, UNAIDS

Remarks from the floor

10:30 – 10:45 Coffee Break

10:45 – 12:00 Panel 1: Addressing inequalities that prevent progress in the HIV response for people who use drugs

This session will open with an introductory intervention on how harm reduction services are adapting to the evolving needs of people who use drugs, including changing drug use patterns across age groups and the impacts of humanitarian, conflict-related, and other crisis settings. The session will then move into a panel discussion examining how persistent structural and social inequalities continue to undermine progress in HIV prevention, treatment, and care for people who use drugs. Drawing on lived experience, panelists will explore how intersecting forms of discrimination and exclusion—linked to age, gender, gender and sexual identity, incarceration, humanitarian crises, displacement, and stigma—shape access to harm reduction and broader health and social services. The discussion will highlight evidence-based, rights-based, and community-led approaches to addressing these barriers, with particular attention to reaching those most often left behind in the HIV response.

Panelists:

- **Kaumba Akuffo**, Human Rights Advocate and Co-Founder, Tithandizane Comfort Homes, Zambia
- **Álvaro Morales Aser**, Psicólogo saniatio-forense especializado en psicofarmacología y drogas de abuso, Hospital Clínico San Carlos, Spain
- **Alexei Lakhov**, Policy Advisor, European Network of People who Use Drugs
- **Tatyana Sleiman**, Former Executive Director, Skoun, Lebanon
- **Nara de Araujo**, Director of Prevention and Social Reintegration, National Secretariat for Drug Policy at the Ministry of Justice and Public Security, Brazil

Remarks from the floor

12:00 – 13:15 Lunch break

13:15 – 14:45 Panel 2: Protecting human rights through law and policy change

This session will start from INPUD-led presentation of UNAIDS/UNODC/INPUD Drug Decriminalization Guidance followed by a panel discussion that will examine how human rights-based law and policy reform is essential to achieving the Global AIDS Strategy goals for people who use drugs. Panelists will explore evidence and country experiences demonstrating how decriminalization of drug use, alternatives to punishment, and protection of civic space contribute to improved HIV outcomes, reduced stigma and discrimination, and stronger community leadership. The discussion will also highlight the central role of people who use drugs in shaping legal reform and human rights advocacy, including the use of the Global AIDS Strategy and the Guidance Note as an advocacy and accountability tools

Introductory presentation

- **Mandeep Dhaliwal**, Director, Prosperity and Well-being Hub: “UNAIDS/UNDP/INPUD guidance note “Decriminalization of drug use in the context of HIV”

Panelists:

- **Aniedi Akpan**, Chairperson, Drug Harm Reduction Advocacy Network (DHRAN), Executive Director, Drug Free and Preventive Healthcare Organization (DAPHO) / Nigeria
- **Verónica Russo**, Latin American and Caribbean Network of People Who Use Drugs (Red Latinoamericana y del Caribe de Personas que Usan Drogas) / Argentine Network for the Rights and Assistance of People Living with HIV (Red Argentina para los Derechos y Asistencia de las Personas con VIH), Argentina
- **Ardhany Suryadarma**, National Policy Manager, Rumah Cemara, Indonesia
- **Elsa Maia**, Senior Officer, General-Directorate for Intervention on Addictive Behaviours and Dependencies, Ministry of Health, Portugal

Remarks from the floor

14:45 – 15:00 Coffee Break

15:00 – 16:30 Panel 3: Sustainable financing for harm reduction

The session will begin with an introductory presentation providing a global overview of funding gaps and transition challenges, followed by a moderated panel discussion and remarks from the floor. This will be followed by panel discussion that will focus on the long-term sustainability of harm reduction services, with particular attention to financing, integration within national health systems, and the preservation of community-led models. The discussion will address the chronic underfunding of harm reduction globally, the impacts of declining donor support, and the urgent need for countries to adopt domestic financing approaches that protect and scale up

essential services. Drawing on global trends and country experiences, panelists will explore practical pathways to transition from donor dependency, integrate harm reduction within primary health care and universal health coverage (UHC) and remove legal and policy barriers that undermine domestically funded, community-led responses.

Moderator

- **Antons Mozalevskis**, Technical officer for key populations, Global HIV, Hepatitis and STI Programme, WHO

Introductory presentation

- **Catherine Cook**, Executive Director, Harm Reduction International: “Addressing harm reduction funding gaps through transition from donor to domestic funding: global overview”

Panelists

- **Sha’ari Ngadiman**, Vice-Chair, Country Coordinating Mechanism, Malaysia
- **Andrew Scheibe**, University of Pretoria and TB HIV Care, South Africa
- **Ganna Dovbakh**, Executive Director, Eurasian Harm Reduction Association

Remarks from the floor

16:30 – 16:45 Closing - Conclusion and ways forward

- **Angeli Achrekar**, UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director

[End of document]