

UNAIDS PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD WORKING GROUP

THEMATIC SEGMENT:

Sustaining the gains of the global HIV response to 2030 and beyond

MEETING SUMMARY: SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP

DATE: Thursday 21 March 2024

MEETING AGENDA

- Welcome and introduction
- Presentation of and discussion on the first draft of the background note on “**Sustaining the gains of the global HIV response to 2030 and beyond**”
- Presentation of and discussion on the draft agenda for the thematic segment
- Next steps

SUMMARY

1. Welcome and introduction

Mr Morten Ussing, Director of Governance, UNAIDS Secretariat, welcomed the PCB working group to its second meeting for the preparation of the thematic segment of the 54th PCB (27 June 2024) on *Sustaining the gains of the global HIV response to 2030 and beyond*.

The Secretariat reminded the working group of agenda of the meeting, starting with a discussion the first full draft of the background note for feedback from the working group. Then the working group would discuss the agenda of the thematic day, where any ideas on speakers, restructuring of panels, and sharpening of themes would be welcomed.

Mr Ussing reminded that the working group, reflecting a subset of the PCB membership, was established to create ownership of the PCB stakeholders in the framing of the background note and discussions for the PCB thematic segment. The thematic segment was a one-day event on the PCB agenda and allowed for an in-depth discussion on a specific programmatic area within the AIDS response. The members of the working group played an important role in shaping the day and the documentation that informs it.

Mr Ussing emphasized that it would be possible to send comments in writing after the meeting, until close of business, 28 March 2024.

2. Presentation of the draft annotated outline of the background note for the thematic segment

Jaime Atienza Azcona, Director of Equitable Financing at the UNAIDS Secretariat introduced the first full draft of the background note. He started by recalling two important reports that UNAIDS had recently published which highlighted the critical juncture at which we stood. “The path that ends AIDS” emphasized the successful trajectories that some countries are on and “In danger” underlined the threats in the HIV response to achieving the 2025 and 2030 targets. He explained that these threats were the reason why there was a need to assess the next stage of the response and think long term about sustainability to introduce the necessary transformations to the HIV response.

Mr Atienza highlighted that country leadership would be key to set each country on the right path for the future, but a broader reflection on what would happen after 2030 was necessary. Unless a vaccine or a cure were found, there would be a large population of people living with HIV after 2030 and a different epidemic trajectory. In the meantime, Mr Atienza noted, the 2030 goal of ‘ending AIDS’ required that the 95-95-95 targets be met by 2025 and sustained up to and beyond 2030. The 10-10-10 targets on policy environment and human rights, and the 30-80-60 targets on community service delivery were key to that end.

Despite gains, HIV treatment, care and support remained uneven globally, Mr Atienza emphasized, and many key and vulnerable populations remain at risk. HIV prevention had not been adequately integrated into the response and remained underfunded. New HIV infections and AIDS-related mortality were still unacceptably high.

Mr Atienza noted that multiple consecutive crises threatened the HIV response globally and in countries, and many factors inhibited the revitalisation of domestic investment. These factors included increases in commodity prices, shifts in multilateralism, debt crises, poverty, new conflicts and humanitarian crises, push back against progress in human rights (including rights related to gender equality, sexual orientation and gender identity) and worsening impacts of climate change.

Mr Atienza further contextualized the political, economic, health and environmental threats to sustainability. While there is broad political agreement on HIV response, commitment and intensity varies, including reversal of gains. New approaches were needed to ensure cost-effective and efficient, human rights- and gender equality-based programming, including strengthening health and community systems. Emerging innovations could potentially improve financing opportunities and resource allocation, and the economic returns on investment in the HIV response were estimated at over 6.5 times greater than the cost. Country leadership and investment remained central to the HIV response, building on the past four decades.

Furthermore, inequalities continued to drive HIV risk, vulnerability and variations in access to and effectiveness of treatment, care and support, the Secretariat underlined. Prioritization was needed, as were social protection, legal and related responses.

Following the contextualization, the presentation further provided a deeper insight into the different chapters of the background note. Mr. Atienza explained that the note would begin with an introduction highlighting the background on gains, the challenges and priorities of the HIV response. This part would be followed by a set of working definitions of sustainability, including

definitions used by the Global Fund, PEPFAR, a UNAIDS working definition, and other definitions.

The following part would focus on progress in the HIV response, showcasing the considerable but uneven progress towards 95-95-95. This chapter would highlight concerns regarding drug resistance, advanced HIV disease, and integration of TB treatment. Insufficient progress towards the 10-10-10 and 30-80-60 targets (and some gains reversed, in a time of pushback against rights) would be underlined here, as well as annual new HIV infections being far above target levels, and what strategies would be needed to invigorate and accelerate HIV prevention. In addition, it would be key to underline that key populations and girls and young women remain most vulnerable to new HIV infections and that data gaps remained for key populations at country level, including HIV prevention and treatment.

Furthermore, the background note would highlight how HIV outcomes were strengthened through integration of HIV and other health services, including PHC and UHC agendas and how HIV and TB vaccines and a cure continued to show promise, but timeframes for viable technologies remained uncertain, while stigma and discrimination remained pervasive and continued to impede progress in the HIV response.

Regarding complex humanitarian emergencies and emerging pandemics, the Secretariat noted that humanitarian emergencies increased fragility, disrupted HIV systems and structures, and impacted people living with HIV, key and vulnerable populations most. Concerns included armed conflicts and related impacts, potential emerging pathogens, and climate change. However, resilience and innovations in the HIV response had been identified during the COVID-19 pandemic.

With regards to HIV financing, Mr Atienza said that there was a widening funding gap — US\$ 20.8 billion were available in 2022 for LMICs, and US\$ 29.3 billion would be needed in 2025. He also highlighted that while countries provided the infrastructure and systems, domestic resource commitments for HIV were increasing slowly. Importantly, Mr Atienza also explained that sustainability of the HIV response did not necessarily imply donors leaving a country.

The Secretariat also noted that investments in HIV prevention were inadequate, innovative financial instruments and private sector mobilization may be insufficient for lower-income country needs, and sustained investment in effective strategies was needed.

Mr Atienza emphasized some important lessons learned:

- People-centred, multisectoral and low-cost approaches with effective outcomes
- Decentralized approaches allowed for focused response and data
- Imbalance between external funding priorities and local conditions, and between HIV prevention and treatment
- Challenges include service integration, prioritization of key and vulnerable populations and integration of community and civil society responses pose challenges for sustainability
- Good progress towards elimination of vertical transmission of HIV, syphilis and Hepatitis B—but barriers remained
- Need to invigorate and harmonise biomedical and social science research, medical and socio-behavioural responses to ensure sustainability

The Secretariat highlighted that a call for submission of case studies had been disseminated. Specifically, UNAIDS was seeking details on the following:

1. Approaches for sustainability planning to sustain impact:

- Political and financial dimensions
- Epidemiological and programmatic dimensions
- Community leadership and rights dimensions
- Innovations, science, and financing

2. Lessons from the past and present to explore opportunities for sustaining impact towards 2030 and beyond, including:

- People-led and centered responses
- Multisectorality considerations
- Enabling policies, environments
- Innovations

3. Integration of the HIV response into PHC/UHC and pandemics prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR), and other aspects of convergence/integration

The fourth and last section of the background note would provide a vision for a sustainable HIV response, and an overview of what is needed to meet the sustainability challenge in brief – providing a lead into the sections that follow.

1) These include:

1. A new sustainability framework
2. Health and community systems and UHC
3. Preparedness
4. Sustained leadership
5. Sustainable financing

2) Implications for sustainability

Key concepts, progress and priorities in relation to sustainability

3) Sustainability dialogue, planning and change

Enabling environment for sustainability, partnerships and road maps.

Lastly, Mr. Atienza noted that the background note would end with reflections on the sustainability dialogue, planning and change, as well as suggested recommendations, especially for local responses to ensure sustainability.

3. Discussion on the first draft

The PCB working group welcomed the annotated outline. Specific comments included the following:

Member States:

- Thanked the Secretariat for a very comprehensive draft background note.

- Emphasized the need to convince not only country leaders but also donors to buy into the concept of frontloading investments now in order to make future gains.
- Recommended acknowledging that funding at country level was regulated under public finance management processes and was part of a complex ecosystem pressured not only for HIV but for other needs too. Emphasized the role of the treasuries that oversee financial management processes in each country.
- Underlined the importance of adolescent girls and young women in ending AIDS, particularly when 77% of countries that have the least ability to pay for their HIV response have new HIV infections in this population, resulting also in higher annual additional costs for treatment.
- Suggested clearly articulating in what ways sustainability was not synonymous with donors leaving a country.
- Regarding women and girls, highlighted a new study in France showing that more preventative tools were being used. Suggested adding a paragraph or case study on innovative community combination prevention programmes.
- Emphasized the lessons learned on low-cost prevention commodities and the importance of commodity security, especially in Eastern and Southern Africa.
- Highlighted the issue of aging with HIV, to be included in the background note.

Cosponsors:

- Recommended clarifying the nuances between sustainability as “ending of AIDS as a public health threat by 2030” and “achieving a resilient response up to 2023 and beyond”.
- Suggested agreeing on how the various sustainability definitions related and interacted with each other and asked whether a merging of the definitions should be proposed.
- Expressed appreciation for going broader than convergence with primary health care (PHC) and universal health coverage (UHC), taking into account polycrises and multisectoral issues.
- Recommended using graphics particularly on explaining why community-led HIV responses are effective.
- Mentioned that a one-pager or executive summary could be helpful.

PCB NGO Delegation:

- Echoes the thanks for the comprehensive background note.
- Expressed appreciation for how the 10-10-10 targets had been positioned in the background note, however, suggested that the content on human rights and gender equality could be a stand-alone section.
- Emphasized that the removal of legal barriers and promotion of human rights were non-negotiables in the HIV response.
- Highlighted the need to recognize that strong opposition movements existed against some of these dimensions which represented a thread to sustainability.
- Recommended that the part on community responses also could become a standalone section in the background note.

Other partners:

- Emphasized the importance of multipurpose prevention, and the need to mention sexual health in the background note.
- Highlighted the need to integrate SRH-STI services as a path to sustaining people-centered services and delivering improved HIV and SRH outcomes.

In response to the comments and observations made, the Secretariat thanked the working group for their helpful suggestions.

Mr. Atienza noted the need to highlight a definition of sustainability keeping abreast of the wider debates related to the post-2030 world especially in the absence of an HIV vaccine or cure. He mentioned that at this particular moment, UNAIDS, with many partners, had come up with an updated definition of sustainability building on the previous ones and there were many ways of looking at sustainability, some being sectoral, some focused on HIV only, and others on various diseases.

The Secretariat clarified that the spillovers and incentives for investing in HIV are not only for governments but also international actors. The world still needed increased domestic financing and continued shared responsibility and global solidarity. Mr. Atienza confirmed that HIV was indeed not part of an independent public financial management system and needed to resonate with treasuries, finance ministries and those handling resources allocation, as well as parliamentarians and budget committees. He also concurred that the part on adolescent girls and young women would be strengthened in the background note, and reiterated that any written suggestions could be helpful.

Mr. Atienza emphasized that sustainability was not synonymous with donor exit, but rather a new approach and longer term thinking in light of the changing HIV epidemic, and financial, health and multisectoral changes and challenges. Beyond 2030, in the absence of a vaccine and cure, domestic investments, shared responsibility and global solidarity will still be needed for the HIV response, which should be transformed by then.

Mr. Atienza agreed with the need to highlight integration of HIV and SRH and mentioned the need for a deeper approach to integration involving multiple diseases, primary health care systems and other dimensions of UHC. He said that pushback against human rights and gender equality were present in the document but there were ways in which they could be highlighted further. Commodity security will be reinforced also with a focus on procurement systems.

The Secretariat welcomed the idea of a graphic to illustrate various points, and encouraged the working group to share further comments with concrete details in writing as well as research reports and case studies before the deadline.

4. Presentation of the zero-draft agenda for the thematic segment

Charles Birungi, Advisor for Macroeconomic and Fiscal Policy at the UNAIDS Secretariat presented the draft agenda of the thematic segment.

Mr. Birungi emphasized that the thematic segment would provide an opportunity for the PCB to discuss sustainability including rationale, urgency, challenges, opportunities, and key elements for sustainability planning including immediate, short-, medium- and long-term priorities and processes. In particular, the thematic segment will focus on the following issues:

1. Considerations for innovations and fast-tracking the necessary foundations for sustainability of the HIV response now, up-to 2030, and beyond 2030.

2. Considerations from lessons from the past and present to explore opportunities for sustaining impact towards 2030 and beyond.
3. Recommendations for actions ensuring that the enabling environment, partnerships, responses, and roadmaps are outlined for national, regional and global levels.

He suggested that the thematic segment consist of three round tables with an opening and closing session. The opening session will consist of the introduction of the moderator – possibly a member of the UNAIDS Secretariat – and three keynote addresses to provide the big picture strategic vision regarding the session’s objectives. The keynote addresses will be given by the Executive Director of UNAIDS, a President or Minister-level Member State representative and a civil society representative. These will be followed by a session which will provide the main highlights and key issues from the thematic segment background note presented by two or three members of the Joint Programme.

Mr. Birungi then described the round table discussions. The first would focus on context and urgency of sustainability planning and response, the second on sustainability lessons and opportunities, and the final round table would highlight a vision for a sustainable HIV response. The closing session would summarize and conclude the discussions, as well as highlight key recommendations. A number of speakers was suggested in the draft agenda, and some slots left empty for further proposals to come from the working group.

The Secretariat welcomed suggestions for speakers for each panel for further discussion at the next working group meeting and noted the need for geographical and gender balance for each round table's speakers.

5. Discussion on the zero-draft agenda

The PCB working group welcomed the draft agenda. Specific comments included the following:

Member States:

- Suggested that for the second roundtable, a member of the WHO EURO Communicable Diseases team could be helpful to give examples of resilient health systems for communicable diseases especially HIV.

PCB NGO Delegation:

- Expressed appreciation for the slots dedicated to civil society speakers.
- Mentioned that priority would be given to the issues to be raised.

Cosponsors:

- Proposed for Cash+ for adolescents to be highlighted in one of the panels, as well as PHC referring to a recent evaluation which may highlight lessons learned.

In response to the comments and observations made, the Secretariat thanked the working group for the excellent suggestions made.

Mr. Birungi mentioned that since the first working group meeting, the agenda had been elevated to go beyond financial sustainability. He said that the different evaluations mentioned would be looked into. Finally, he reiterated that the agenda would attempt at bringing as many real world,

concrete examples as possible and that working group members were welcome to send more speaker ideas.

6. Next steps

Mr. Ussing thanked the working group members for the very rich discussion during the meeting and encouraged to send written inputs on the background note, the draft agenda and speakers by close of day, 28 March 2024. He encouraged working group members to send speaker names as soon as possible, as the Secretariat needed to facilitate travel arrangements, which required time. The ambition was to have all speakers present in the room for the thematic segment, though of course the PCB had approved the modality of virtual participation as a fallback option.

Mr. Ussing also encouraged working group members to send case studies. A set of case studies would be used to illustrate key parts of the background note. Mr. Ussing recalled that all case studies would be compiled into a conference room paper that would accompany the background note. Lastly, he thanked the working group for their time and excellent input and closed the meeting.