

UNAIDS PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD WORKING GROUP

THEMATIC SEGMENT:

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

MEETING SUMMARY: FIRST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP

DATE: Tuesday 20 February 2024

MEETING AGENDA

- Welcome and introduction
- Presentation of the annotated outline of the background note
- Discussion on the annotated outline of the background note
- Presentation of and discussion of the zero-draft agenda
- Next steps

SUMMARY

1. Welcome and introduction

Mr. Morten Ussing, Director of Governance, UNAIDS Secretariat, welcomed the PCB working group to its first 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*.

Mr. Ussing recalled the agenda for the meeting and thanked the participants who had joined the working group. He mentioned that the working group was diverse and geographically balanced, and for this reason interpretation in French and English – the two working languages of UNAIDS – was available. As an important partner in the HIV response and key in sustainability discussions, he said that the Global Fund was also part of the working group. In addition, Cambodia would be joining as of the second working group meeting.

The Secretariat highlighted that the working group was established to create ownership of the PCB stakeholders in the framing of the thematic segment background note and discussions for the PCB thematic segment. The members play an important role in shaping the day and the documentation that informs it.

Mr. Ussing remarked that the first meeting of the working group was held early in the year, which was important to be able to select the speakers early in advance and ensure smooth travel arrangements for them.

Mr. Ussing recalled the process for selecting the theme. The PCB Bureau sends out a call for themes to the PCB members and the proposals for themes are reviewed by the PCB Bureau based on a set of criteria. The Bureau then puts forward its proposals for the themes for the thematic segments of the following year for PCB consideration and endorsement. This theme originally came from the Cosponsors and was widely supported by the Bureau, which had asked for some elements from other overlapping proposals to be integrated into it, namely community leadership and dimensions on an HIV vaccine and cure.

The Secretariat said that the main expected outcome of the first meeting was to listen to the comments, inputs and suggestions on the proposed focus and key messages of the draft annotated outline of the background note and zero-draft agenda. At the second meeting, the first full draft of the background note, the near-final agenda for the day as well as suggested speakers would be discussed. The draft background note and agenda would be shared with the group ahead of that meeting. The background note and thematic segment should speak to each other.

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 outline of the background note. Mr. Atienza highlighted the context in which the topic had been chosen. He said that 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, with many key and vulnerable populations at risk. HIV prevention had not been adequately integrated into the response and remained underfunded. AIDS-related mortality was unacceptably high, he said.

Mr. Atienza emphasized 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, pushback against progress in human rights (including rights related to gender equality, sexual orientation and gender identity) and worsening impacts of climate change.

Stronger health systems and a steady advance towards Universal Health Care (UHC) were needed to secure longer term sustainability, he said.

Mr. Atienza said that innovative and transformative approaches that deliver results faster were needed on the short- and medium term to:

- 1) Advance the HIV prevention agenda,
- 2) Accelerate access to HIV treatment and new technologies,
- 3) Expand community-led responses,
- 4) Address critical behavioural and social determinants that contribute to new HIV infections, and
- 5) Provide sustainable and equitable financing to support the HIV response.

In addition, he said that a focus on the transformations needed to the HIV response was critical to ensure long term sustainability. Countries need economic growth and revenue collection – so they must be positioned to restructure debt, ensure financial stability and grow their fiscal space, and establish sound footing for post-2030 scenarios.

The presentation further provided a deeper insight into the different chapters of the background note. Mr. Atienza explained that the note will 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 definitions of sustainability, including definitions used by the Global Fund, PEPFAR, a UNAIDS working definition, and other definitions. The background note then explores the gaps, challenges and implications for sustainability, looking firstly at HIV prevention, treatment and AIDS-related mortality, and secondly at the implications for sustainability.

Thereafter, the background paper delves into the 4 subsections. The first subsection focuses on:

1) 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 are needed to ensure cost-effective and efficient, human rights- and gender-equality-based programming, including strengthening health and community systems.
- Emerging innovations can potentially improve financing opportunities and resource allocation, and the economic returns on investment in the HIV response are estimated at 6.5 times greater than the cost.

2) Inequalities and HIV

- Inequalities continue to drive HIV risk, vulnerability and variations in treatment, care and support. Prioritization is needed, as are social protection, legal and related responses.

The second subsection addresses three areas:

1) Opportunities through convergence and integration with PHC

Key concepts for convergence are included in the WHO publication: HIV: Convergent actions, policy considerations for decision-makers, the PHC operational framework, and areas including sexual and reproductive health and rights, gender-based violence, among others.

2) Multi-disciplinarity and the HIV response

In the context of biomedicalization, there is a need to reinvigorate and re-integrate social science approaches into the HIV response — including HIV to strengthen HIV prevention, address gender inequality, stigma and discrimination and incorporate socio-behavioural approaches across prevention, treatment and care.

3) Potential for rapid advances

This includes potentials for scientific and technological advances including vaccines and a cure for HIV.

The third subsection focuses on “what works”:

- 1) While scale-up of ART has demonstrable impacts on the health of people living with HIV, and reduces HIV transmission, this section will provide an overview and reflection on other approaches that have made gains and that provide insight into complementary programming (including case studies).
- 2) Lessons from history (low-cost, people-centred approaches, multisectorality, community-led responses, enabling policies and environments, decentralization, intensified approaches, and innovations).

The fourth and last section will provide a vision for a sustainable HIV response. This section will provide 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 will end with reflections on the sustainability dialogue, planning and change, as well as suggested recommendations.

3. Discussion on the Outline

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

Member States

- Expressed that the outline is well-written and captures many important aspects of the topic.
- Asked about the inclusion of the topic of climate change within the broad thematic segment topic of sustainability of the HIV response, and suggested to make reference to the Rio Political Declaration on Social Determinants of Health, which includes structural determinants that can impact health in general and therefore the HIV response.
- Expressed some terminology preferences including for using the word “challenges” rather than “threats” in the context of the background note.
- Emphasized the issue of scaling up and keeping a focus on effective HIV prevention programmes, and support for countries that are still lagging behind, particularly support in increasing their capacity for commodity production processes such as for condoms, especially in Eastern and Southern Africa.

- Highlighted that sustainability was inherently about shifting roles and countries taking the lead navigating and supporting the processes to take on planning, programming and financing for the HIV response. In the financing section, they emphasized it would be helpful to reflect on what countries have achieved for political and technical leadership, bearing in mind that the financing infrastructure health workers was based on has been primarily international.
- Regarding HIV prevention, mentioned it would be key to explore sustainable prevention beyond the bio-medical dimension. Emerging data showed that behavioral and structural elements were needed beyond the medical one – a multisectoral HIV response was key to sustainability.
- Requested that the introduction would also speak to the receding gains in legal environments.
- Highlighted that concrete case studies would be helpful to illustrate how to frame the role of different stakeholders in country, and to showcase what successful countries have done to reach some of the HIV-related targets.
- Other elements that are key to the HIV prevention agenda were: comprehensive sexuality education and sexual and reproductive rights, including for key populations.

PCB NGO Delegation

- Stressed that the proposal looked very strong.
- Reflecting on the last PCB NGO report presented in December 2023, which focused on people living with HIV in humanitarian emergencies, emphasized that it would be helpful to acknowledge the threat that humanitarian emergencies pose to sustainability, and address this alongside the other critical sustainability challenges identified.

In response to the comments and observations made, the Secretariat noted the importance of the issues raised by the members of the working group and would aim to reflect them as relevant in the background note.

Mr. Atienza referred to Rio Political Declaration and said this approach would be developed further. The language shift requests were also noted. He agreed with the need to emphasize the role of countries in leading the HIV response. Mr. Atienza also highlighted the need to focus on HIV prevention and mention the technologies that will make the response sustainable in the future. The relevance of the non-biomedical was key and would indeed be emphasized further, together with multisectorality dimensions. Lastly, he noted the importance of including the challenges of humanitarian responses within the sustainability discussion.

Mr. Ussing mentioned that a call for case studies would soon be sent and that the case studies collected would showcase best practices, and these would infuse the background note. The Secretariat welcomed the working group to share further suggestions with concrete details in writing 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 zero-draft agenda of the thematic segment.

Mr. Birungi emphasised 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 3 round tables with an opening and closing session. The opening session will consist of the introduction of the moderator and 3 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 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 a member 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.

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

Member States

- Emphasized the importance of the physical presence of speakers, and requested that all efforts be made to enable them to come to the PCB meeting.
- Mentioned that speakers should draw on real examples from case studies that highlight successes.
- Suggested inviting speakers who bring a whole-of-government, multisectoral perspective and could be a powerful statement to promote more political engagement across sectors and working transversely for an integrated response.

In response to the comments and observations made, the Secretariat thanked all the members for their encouraging input. Mr. Birungi emphasized the need to incorporate real-world studies to be highlighted by the speakers. He noted that the thematic segment would delve into sustainability beyond the financial aspects and a whole-of-government approach could be helpful.

The Secretariat would propose a revised agenda for the second meeting.

6. Next steps

Mr. Ussing thanked the working group members for their comments and encouraged them to send written inputs by Monday 26 February 2024 as well as any relevant documents to support the drafting of the background note.

The Secretariat reiterated that the call for submission of good practices would be sent out to the PCB members and all permanent missions and expressed hope that working group members would submit good practice illustrations and disseminate the call further to partners. These will contribute to setting the agenda for the thematic segment, compiled in a

conference room paper and used for other UNAIDS reports. Mr. Ussing said that all working group members were welcome to disseminate this call to partners. He added that the working group members were welcome to share speaker ideas.

Finally, Mr. Ussing emphasized that all thematic segments were important, but the topic of sustainability was timely because of the soon to take place launch of the process to develop the next Global AIDS Strategy.

The Secretariat thanked the working group for their time and excellent input, and the Cosponsors and Secretariat colleagues for their preparations in anticipation for the second meeting of the working group.

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