

**UNAIDS PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD WORKING GROUP
THEMATIC SEGMENT on CERVICAL CANCER and HIV**

***Cervical Cancer and HIV - addressing linkages and common inequalities to
save women's lives***

MEETING SUMMARY: SECOND MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP

DATE: Wednesday 7 October 2020

MEETING AGENDA

1. Welcome and introduction
 2. Presentation of and discussion on the draft Background Note for the thematic segment
 3. Presentation of and discussion on the draft agenda for the thematic segment
 4. Way forward
 5. Any other business
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SUMMARY

1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Mr. Morten Ussing, Chief of Governance and Multilateral Affairs, UNAIDS Secretariat, welcomed the PCB Working Group to its second meeting for the preparation of the Thematic Segment of the 47th PCB on *Cervical Cancer and HIV - addressing linkages and common inequalities to save women's lives*.

The Secretariat recalled that a long time has passed since the first meeting of the Working Group in March, and that this topic was supposed to be discussed at the 46th PCB meeting. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the June PCB was shortened, and the Thematic Segment postponed to the upcoming meeting in December.

Mr. Ussing thanked the working group members on the comments sent on the draft outline in March and mentioned that the Secretariat looked forward to receiving further comments on the first full draft of the Background Note and agenda of the Thematic segment.

The Secretariat said that suggestions from the working group members were also welcome on speakers as soon as possible, that written comments and proposals were welcome too. The Secretariat informed the group that a summary of the meeting would be posted online.

The Secretariat reminded participants that a call for good practices from countries was going to be sent out and encouraged participants to send relevant case studies.

2. PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT BACKGROUND NOTE FOR THE THEMATIC SEGMENT

Ms. Ani Shakarishvili, Special Adviser, Fast Track Implementation Department, introduced the draft Background Note for the thematic segment. Ms Shakarishvili explained that the Background Note has benefited from inputs from UNAIDS regional and country offices, as well as from cosponsors.

Ms. Shakarishvili said that the main themes in the Background Note are about common inequities and inequalities as drivers of both HIV and HPV/cervical cancer among women and girls on the one hand, and on the other, what is different although HIV and HPV both are sexually transmitted infections (STIs). She also mentioned that the Background Note includes how COVID-19 had affected the programmes on both HIV and HPV/CC.

She emphasized the call from Mr. Ussing on the importance of receiving country case studies and encouraged working group members to spread the word further.

Ms. Shakarishvili explained that the Background Note gives a large overview of HIV and HPV/cervical cancer interlinkages in different settings and different parts of world. A continuum of services is presented, especially for those who are the most vulnerable, using a life-cycle approach. She also emphasised the timeliness of this discussion, referencing the relevance not only to SDG3 but also to other SDGs, as well as the recently endorsed global strategy on the elimination of cervical cancer by WHO Member States.

She highlighted the emphasis throughout the Background Note on inequities and the causes of inequities and drew participants' attention to the various topics emerging in the chapters:

- Determinants of HIV and cervical cancer: gender inequality, health disparities, socio-economic inequality, laws, cultural and community environments among others.

- Interventions that are proven to be effective and global recommendations.
- Space for new science, new data systems: HPV testing, screening for CC, self-sampling of HVP testing empowering women. New data systems.
- Challenges and opportunities for integrated approaches, including health and non-health interventions and multisectoral ones.
- The importance of community engagement.
- Opportunities for integrating approaches for care delivery. The importance for countries to put in place systems that are free of charge.
- Suggestions for ways forward to integrate rights-based policies.
- Emphasis on the need to fill in knowledge gaps as well as the funding gaps.

3. DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT BACKGROUND NOTE ON CERVICAL CANCER AND HIV

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

Cosponsors

- Said the Background Note was a solid, comprehensive document, but could do with some shortening and restructuring, perhaps chronologically from HPV testing to treatment.
- Reference could be made to SRHR essential package from the ICDP conference in November which has a section on reproductive cancers.
- It was suggested that the Background Note could mention shortage of HPV vaccines.
- Stressed for the importance of having geographic balance in the case studies presented in the paper.
- Suggested that the recommendations could be made broader.

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- Said that the Civil Society advisory group was meeting shortly after the working group meeting and that they were still collecting comments as the Background Note is a long, but comprehensive document.
- Highlighted that the Background Note could consider mentioning institutional violence in accessing care as well as financial barriers that women face, especially women living with HIV. It also mentioned that young women, especially those living with HIV, face multiple challenges, and that it is important to be highlighted even more, perhaps in a text box.
- Stressed that vaccines should focus on the most dangerous strains of HPV, through the life cycle, and not focused on young women only.
- Said that some strains of HPV are not covered, and this should be highlighted as a limitation. Partial protection not the same as full protection, and the next generation should look at strains across the world.
- Emphasized that it is important to recognize how discrimination impacts access and utilization of services, including in contexts where huge progress has been made. There is a need to provide insights and highlight strategies to tackle inequality and inequity, including by addressing institutional stigma and racism against some groups of women so as to reach all women in their diversity.

4. PRESENTATION OF THE DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE THEMATIC SEGMENT

Ms. Shakarishvili described that the thematic segment would be virtual, last four hours and that the objectives were to:

1. Review evidence on the interlink between HIV and HPV, HIV and cervical cancer including in relation to co-infection and co-morbidity, common gender and socio-economic vulnerabilities and inequalities, health disparities, stigma and discrimination, SRHR and right to health;
2. Feature and discuss various approaches for responding to HPV/cervical cancer and HIV epidemics from human rights, gender and universal health perspectives, including through greater community engagement and holistic people-centered healthcare approaches across the lifecycle;
3. Identify strategies to promote equity, human rights and people-centered approaches in the context of cervical cancer and HIV, including through awareness raising and education of stakeholder groups, and to eliminate stigma, discrimination and inequalities in access to prevention and lifesaving care services and innovation
4. Identify strategies and approaches for joint advocacy, including uniting the cancer/cervical cancer, SRHR, NCD and HIV community movements; to increase cooperation and collaboration between different actors and sectors; to jointly address challenges in integrating cervical cancer and HIV prevention, treatment and care programmes and services, and engagement of communities;
5. Suggest recommendations and propose a way forward.

Ms. Shakarishvili explained that the first part was the agenda-setting part, the introduction of the topic. It would be interesting to bring personal stories into the discussion.

There could be some keynote speakers, addressing the interlink between HIV and HPV/cervical cancer, possibly of having a speaker from Government and a person living with HIV with their life story.

Then there was a session to provide a brief and specific overview of synergies and interlinks, highlighting key messages for the audience.

Three panel discussions were proposed. However, there would be a need to manage time efficiency.

- Panel 1: What does it take to eliminate cervical cancer as a public health issue, including for women and girls living with and at risk of HIV?
- Panel 2: Women and girls left behind
- Panel 3: Innovations that save women and girls' lives

Panel discussions would be followed by remarks from the floor. The last session would summarize conclusions and ways forward.

Ms. Shakarishvili said she would welcome ideas keeping in mind that this would be the first time that the thematic segment is virtual. Feedback was welcomed on the right balance, right panels and issues, speakers to propose, and ideas of things that have worked well in virtual settings.

5. DISCUSSION ON THE DRAFT AGENDA FOR THE THEMATIC SEGMENT

Member States

- Noted the importance of addressing issues of resource mobilization; perhaps bringing one of the speakers to look at how to develop a resource mobilization strategy.
- Stressed that with regards to the linkages, we need to leverage the gains of what we have achieved with HIV and make use of well-established community structures.

Cosponsors

- Highlighted that the Zoom virtual platform worked well for the multistakeholder consultation on the next UNAIDS Strategy. Mentioned that it might be possible to organise simultaneous smaller group discussions.
- Suggested to include speakers from key populations groups, for example a sex worker.
- Suggested that some key issues on sexual and reproductive health could be articulated as well.

PCB NGO Delegation

- Recognised the challenge to organize this thematic segment virtually, especially with the scope of Background Note being broad and with only 4 hours available.
- Said that possible speaker names would be submitted later.

6. WAY FORWARD

Mr. Ussing said that we were looking forward to written suggestions. He encouraged working group members to give speaker names as well as ideas, so that we can firm up what the agenda would look like. He said there would be opportunity to ensure we have the right balance.

He encouraged members to comment on both the agenda and the Background Note itself, with the deadline of COB Wednesday 14 October. He also said that the working group may convene for a 3rd meeting in November.