

UPDATE ON STRATEGIC HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Additional documents for this item: People of UNAIDS 2023 (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/CRP4); Administrative Review Statistical Overview for 2023 (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/CRP5); and Corrective administrative actions, including disciplinary measures imposed in 2023 (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/CRP6)

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

96. *Take note* of the update on strategic human resources management issues;

Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions: none

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Executive summary

1. UNAIDS's people are its most valuable asset. A commitment to culture transformation, modernization of the organization and duty of care guide UNAIDS's efforts to ensure that its staff can best support countries and communities to fulfil the goals of the 2021–2026 Global AIDS Strategy and to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
2. In 2023, UNAIDS completed its alignment process. The alignment harmonized the organization to the 2021–2026 Global AIDS Strategy, leveraged and optimized the Secretariat's comparative advantage in coordination and knowledge-sharing to drive results, and facilitated necessary cost-savings. During this transition period, UNAIDS invested resources to ensure that staff were supported to take advantage of the new organizational structure; institutional knowledge was safeguarded; and recruitment processes were strengthened.
3. The alignment process and further efficiencies have led to savings for the organization in the range of US\$ 20 million. Despite the cost savings, funding shortfalls continue to threaten the ability to use UNAIDS's comparative advantage to the full in support of the Global AIDS Strategy.
4. The People Strategy 2023–2026 has marked its first year of implementation. It complements the alignment process to ensure that staff are supported in their new roles and with new ways of working. The Strategy emphasized the following guiding principles for the Secretariat: (1) investment in learning, development and growth; (2) enhancing gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion and antiracism; (3) leveraging new ways of working; (4) enforcing respectful conduct and zero tolerance; and (5) supporting staff well-being and engagement. The reporting in this update is aligned to those priorities. An overview table on the status of the strategy's implementation is included in the Annex.
5. The upcoming biennium is crucial for implementation of the Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework and the Global AIDS Strategy. To help staff deliver as efficiently as possible during this critical period, UNAIDS has made additional efforts to prioritize work; implement innovative and collaborative ways of working; streamline processes; provide staff with the resources and support they need; and ensure staff well-being.

Introduction

6. This report provides an update on human resource management activities undertaken by the UNAIDS Secretariat during the reporting period, April 2023 to March 2024. As requested by the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) at its 30th meeting in June 2012, this report is submitted annually. Human resources statistics are included in this update in accordance with the request of the PCB at its 50th meeting in June 2022.

Background and context

7. Culture transformation, modernization of the organization and duty of care ensure that UNAIDS embodies its highest values, putting staff alongside the communities it serves and ensuring they are properly supported to face one of the most challenging environments for the global HIV response in more than 40 years of the pandemic.

8. UNAIDS's alignment process culminated in 2023. The multicountry office model has been expanded, national positions have been created and the structure of country teams has been harmonized. To ensure that staff are closer to the people they serve, teams have been moved from the Global Centre in Geneva to Johannesburg, Bangkok and Nairobi. Teams were also moved from Geneva to Bonn. The Middle East and North Africa Regional Office was closed and oversight of Country Offices was relocated to the Western and Central Africa and the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Offices. In addition, a new model involving the placement of HIV advisers in Resident Coordinator's Offices has been piloted in five countries.
9. New teams, such as Influencing and Partnership, and new Communities of Practice have been established and harmonized in accordance with the Global AIDS Strategy to ensure that UNAIDS is positioned to drive results. The alignment and additional efficiencies have generated savings for the organization in the range of US\$20 million.
10. Complementing the Global AIDS Strategy and the alignment process, the UNAIDS People Management Strategy marked its first year of implementation in 2023. Reporting in this update is aligned to the Strategy. Applying a people-centred approach and building toward a value-driven and collaborative culture, the People Strategy outlines key priorities for UNAIDS through 2026 to support cultural transformation, modernize the organization and fulfil its duty of care to staff.
11. Funding shortfalls continue to threaten the ability of the organization to effectively coordinate and deliver on the Secretariat's full comparative advantage in support of the Global AIDS Strategy. Building on its resource mobilization efforts and the cost savings achieved due to realignment, UNAIDS has reprioritized its work to operate within a US\$ 160 million annual budget—a sharp reduction from its approved funding—and it has continued with efforts to maximize efficiency while supporting staff through this difficult period.
12. Global challenges to the HIV response exacerbate these difficulties. Reassessments of global health and social protection models in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic slow-downs, growing humanitarian and security crises, and the mounting impact of climate change have diminished the focus on the HIV response. At the same time, additional barriers to prevention, testing and treatment for people living with and affected by HIV are being introduced. Human rights challenges, such as stigma and discrimination, criminalization of marginalised populations leading to barriers to health services access, continue to undermine effective HIV responses. A backlash to human rights standards and commitments in several countries makes it even more challenging for UNAIDS to operate.
13. It is in this evolving context that this update on strategic human resource management issues, along with its accompanying conference room papers, are presented to the PCB. A workforce data report for 2023 and annual reports on administration of justice and disciplinary and corrective measures are presented to the Board as conference room papers.

People of UNAIDS

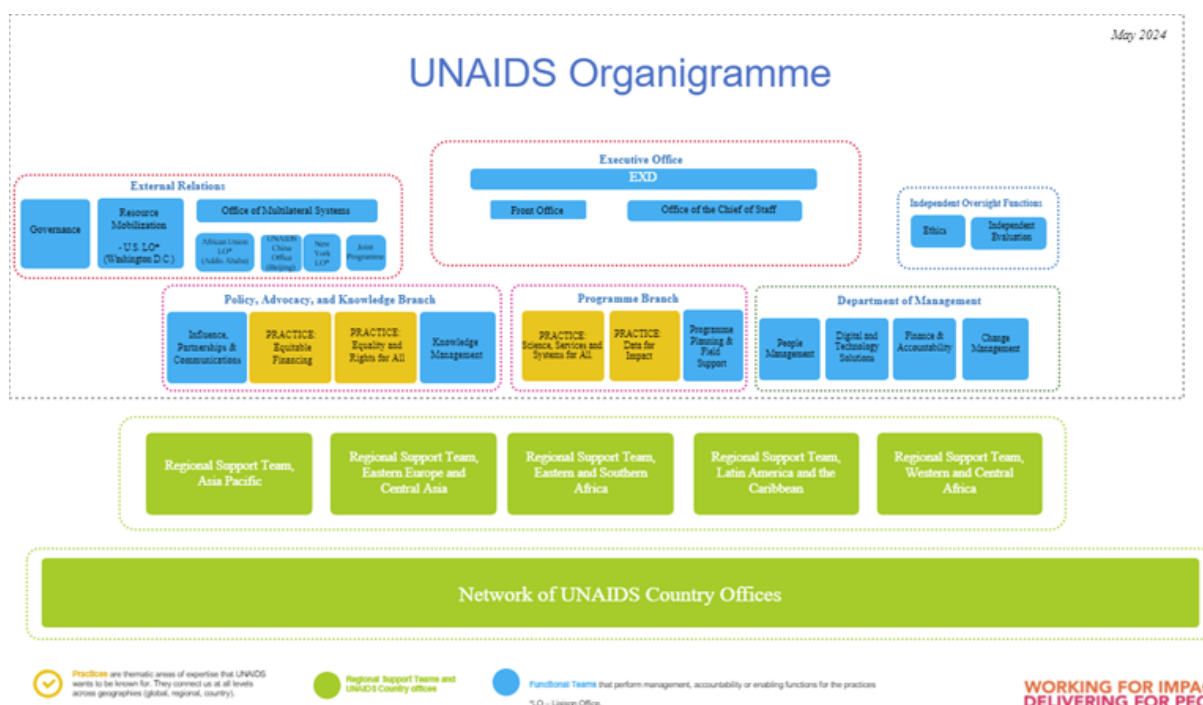
14. People are the most valuable asset of the UNAIDS Secretariat and of the Joint Programme. Its ability to achieve its mandate is directly linked to the competence and commitment of its workforce. Without highly skilled and motivated staff, the Secretariat cannot meet the ever-evolving challenges of the AIDS pandemic.

15. UNAIDS's alignment and movement of staff has amounted to a major transition for its workforce. The purpose is to meet the needs of partners in the HIV response and to be a diverse and inclusive organization that is equipped to deliver on its mission.

Operational Aspects

16. Initiated in 2021, the alignment process was concluded in 2023 with implementation of the new organizational structure. The alignment process was driven by five key objectives to ensure that UNAIDS is:
- aligned with the Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026 and achieving its highest impact;
 - financially sustainable and more cost-effective;
 - diverse and inclusive, and therefore legitimate and credible;
 - knowledge-driven and optimizing its world-wide expertise and staff; and
 - aligned with UN Reform, principally within its work on pandemic preparedness.

Figure 1. UNAIDS organigramme



Source: UNAIDS HRO, May 2024

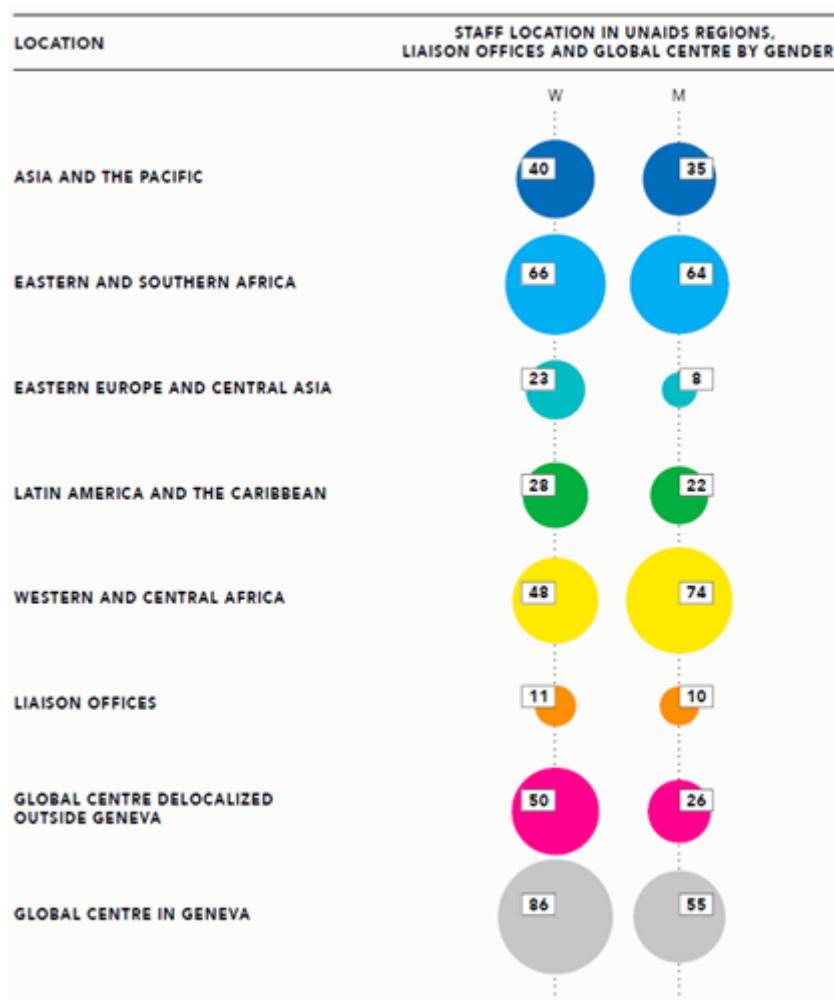
17. During 2023, UNAIDS facilitated the transition of staff to new roles and locations as part of decentralization efforts. It also accelerated the recruitment of new staff to fill open positions and sought to minimize disruption of ongoing work and collaboration on the ground. Those steps were taken while seeking to achieve increased capacity for programmatic impact, cross-regional support and organizational savings.
18. As expected, during this period of transition, staff turnover was higher than usual. In the reporting period, 83 staff left UNAIDS, of whom 48% were female and 52% were male. Retirement, separation by mutual agreement, resignation, end of temporary contract and interagency transfer constituted the main reasons for departure. New and strengthened initiatives have been developed to support institutional memory and learning during this transition period.

19. To implement the new organizational structure and minimize the impact of staff departures, UNAIDS prioritized and strengthened its recruitment processes. Those efforts included streamlining administrative components, investing in recruitment resources, providing greater guidance to hiring managers at the inception of new selection processes, and garnering additional administrative support from the World Health Organization's Global Conference and Training Centre. Evaluation processes remained stringent to ensure the best candidates were selected, and they were expanded to address risks related to improper use of social media.
20. In 2023, the number of completed selection processes for advertised positions almost tripled from the previous year (from 40 in 2022 to 114 in 2023). However, there was a substantial turnover of Human Resources Operations staff, with experienced staff members leaving the department and new personnel hired and trained. In addition, the shortlisting of candidates (usually done in consultation with the entire selection panel rather than the hiring manager only, to ensure transparency) was identified as the main bottleneck. For this reason, the time taken to complete hirings has increased unfortunately. In 2024, it will be important for the organization to reduce the time of recruitment, with special focus on decreasing the time taken to shortlist candidates.
21. In 2023, UNAIDS recruited 114 staff members, of whom 60% were female and 40% were male. Of them, 38% were internationally recruited professional staff members, 32% were National Professional Officers, and 30% were General Service staff. These figures include nine senior positions (P5 and above) filled through recruitment (six were female and three were male) and four national Country Directors (Algeria, Belarus, Niger and Tajikistan), of whom two were female and two were male.
22. By December 2023, nearly 30 international UCDs had completed their tours of duty. Efforts to facilitate a smooth transition, maintain institutional knowledge and ensure continuity of work, are described in the following Section of this report. As of March 2024, UNAIDS has 64 Country Directors (UCDs) who cover nearly 90 countries through multi-country arrangements. Forty-two of the UCDs were internationally recruited, and 29 are women.
23. UNAIDS has increased its available pool of candidates for the UCD position. In the first quarter of 2023, a cohort of 18 candidates was selected from 157 applications through a two-day assessment. All candidates who passed the assessment centre process, including those with identified development needs, are assisted through a personalized development plan and invited to participate in the Executive Coaching programme. UCD deployments for 26 countries are now being implemented through 2024.
24. As part of the alignment process, the People Management Department itself underwent significant changes. The Department's two largest teams —HR Operations and Staff Development and Performance— were transferred to the new hub in Bonn, Germany.
25. The position of People Management Director remained vacant throughout 2023; the UNAIDS Director of Management has filled that role in the interim. An initial selection process was supplemented by a search which a specialized company conducted in a bid to strengthen diversity in the pool of candidates. In 2024, UNAIDS appointed Stephane Grieb to serve as the People Management Director. He will take up the role beginning on 1 June 2024.

Demographics

26. As requested by the PCB at its 50th session, workforce statistics are included in this update. Additional data are available in the conference room paper, "People of UNAIDS 2023" (UNAIDS/ PCB (54)/CRP4).

Figure 2. Workforce composition



Source: UNAIDS - HRO, April 2024

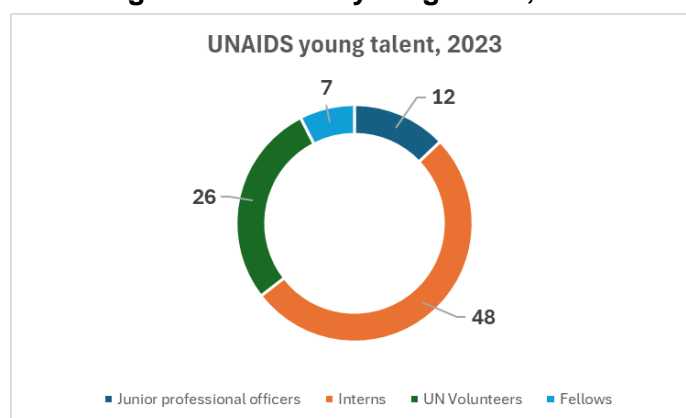
27. As of December 2023, the number of staff employed by the Secretariat stabilized at 646, following several years of decrease after a peak of around 900 in 2011. Staff hail from 120 countries around the world. Staff from Africa represent nearly half of the total (47%), followed by western Europe and North America (20%), Asia and the Pacific (18%), Latin America and the Caribbean (10%), and eastern Europe and Central Asia (6%).

28. With the completion of the alignment process, staff have been moved from the Global Centre to hubs in Bonn, Johannesburg, Nairobi and Bangkok; many of them have been co-located with regional and country units. At the end of 2023, 78% of staff worked in Regional, Country and Liaison Offices, while 22% worked in Global Centre functions in Geneva. UNAIDS has maintained the commitment it set in 2012 whereby no more than 30% of staff would work in the Global Centre and no less than 70% would work in Regional, Country and Liaison Offices.

29. About half of UNAIDS staff (47%) are in the International Professional category, 21% are National Professional Officers, and 32% are General Service staff.
30. UNAIDS has 352 female and 294 male staff members, with women exceeding the number of men in each staff category. Notably, 48% of UNAIDS Country Directors are women, which near gender parity and represents a marked increase from 27% in 2013. The ungraded positions of Executive and Deputy Executive Directors are all occupied by women. As part of the Gender Action Plan, UNAIDS remains committed to tracking and identifying gendered bottlenecks, while recognizing that gender identity is a continuum between and beyond the male and female binary.
31. The vast majority of UNAIDS staff (83%) are aged between 35 and 59 years. As part of the alignment process, a separation by mutual agreement programme was offered to eligible staff members above the age of 55 years. At the end of 2023, 72 UNAIDS Secretariat were aged 60 years or above (11%) whereas 35 staff members were younger than 35 years (5%). While this was an increase over the 3% in 2022, age diversity remains an area for improvement. In 2023, the average age of new staff recruited at P2 grade was 28 years.

Figure 3. UNAIDS young talent, 2023

32. Efforts to recruit more young people to the organization continue, including with increased investments in the internship programme, introduction of lower-graded international professional positions, continued partnerships with donors in the Junior Programme Officer programme, and the establishment of a new Young Fellowship programme in 2024. In 2023, 12 Junior Programme Officers contributed to the mission of UNAIDS and 48 interns supported Offices across the organization.



UNAIDS People Strategy implementation

33. The UNAIDS People Strategy 2023–2026, which was presented to the PCB in June 2023 at its 52nd meeting, anchors the internal activities of the UNAIDS Secretariat and is based on five guiding principles:
- investment in learning, development and growth;
 - enhancing gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion and antiracism;
 - leveraging new ways of working;
 - enforcing respectful conduct and zero tolerance; and
 - supporting staff well-being and engagement.
34. Within each principle, specific activities and initiatives are outlined alongside progress reporting against key performance indicators. An overview chart of the status of the implementation of the People Strategy is included in an annex to this report.

Investment in learning, development and growth

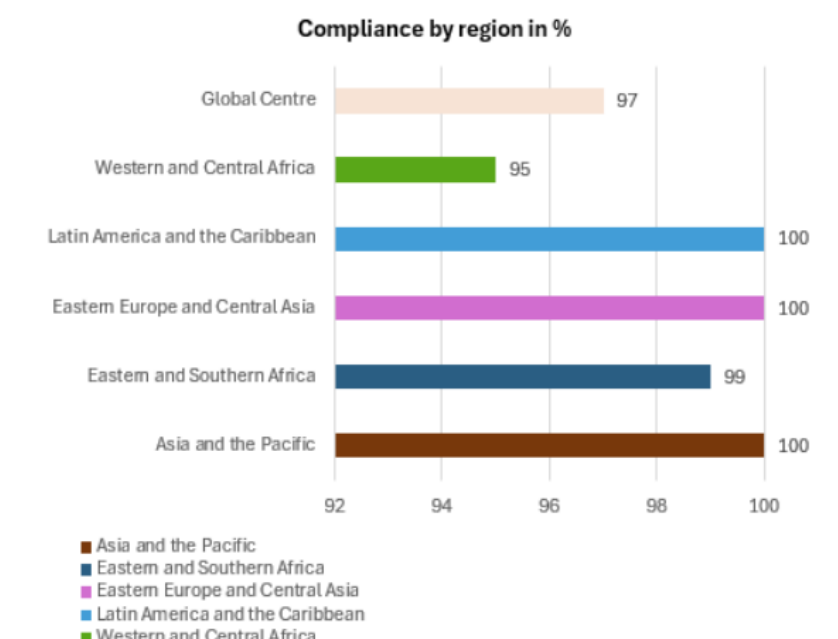
35. Investments in learning, development and growth enable the Secretariat to identify and cultivate talent, create a work environment that fosters innovation and collaboration, and

empower staff to thrive while delivering their best for the people they serve. In 2023, UNAIDS focused on three principal areas:

- supporting and preparing UNAIDS staff to navigate change in our operating environment through learning and development opportunities;
- strengthening the performance management culture through the dissemination of a new policy, opportunities to recognize exceptional contributions and increased support in managing underperformance; and
- developing a strong and inclusive leadership pipeline.

Learning and development

36. UNAIDS's learning culture emphasizes building skills, knowledge and behaviours that support collaboration, integrity, purpose, transparency and accountability. Instilling a caring and growth mindset in leaders and staff strengthens delivery on results that accelerate the HIV response. UNAIDS provides comprehensive support to staff across all levels, offering a range of self-paced and facilitated resources.
37. As part of expanded organizational knowledge-sharing, the "SkillAdvance" Programme was launched in March 2023. Developed by UNAIDS staff for UNAIDS staff, the programme offers self-paced e-learning, with micro-lessons that cover strategic programme priorities, best practices and functions at UNAIDS. In 2023, 40 courses, comprised of hundreds of micro-lessons, were made available in English, French and Spanish. Among the courses that were launched in the "SkillAdvance" library, a total of 607 course completions have been recorded (excluding the mandatory course on Ethics at UNAIDS).
38. UNAIDS's Learning and Performance Management Platform (PALM) continues its robust provision of self-paced learning resources from esteemed providers on a wide range of topics. They include essential skills for managers, communication essentials, stress management, diversity and inclusion, and management of performance and leadership skills. Staff also continue to learn new languages or enhance their existing language skills as part of their individual learning plan, including 103 staff who received Rosetta Stone licenses for that purpose.
39. Mandatory trainings remain integral for equipping UNAIDS personnel with the knowledge and skills to uphold the highest ethical standards and ensure integrity and professionalism. In line with the WHO-UNAIDS policy on preventing sexual misconduct adopted in March 2023, UNAIDS conducted a targeted exercise to achieve full compliance on five core mandatory trainings on abuse, sexual exploitation and ethics. Compliance rates increased to 98% by 31 January 2024. This initiative underscores UNAIDS's commitment to foster a culture of accountability and integrity among all personnel, including consultants, UN Volunteers, fellows, and interns.

Figure 4. Mandatory training compliance rates by UNAIDS department

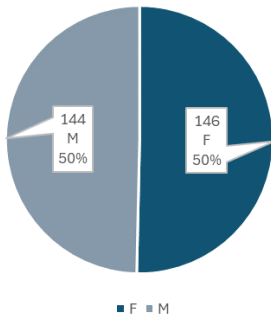
Source: UNAIDS SDP, April 2024

Performance

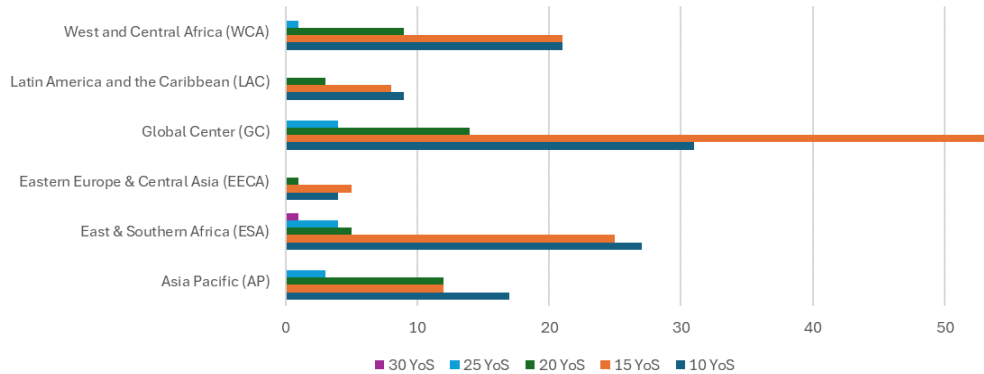
40. UNAIDS implements a robust performance evaluation process. Developmental and performance management interventions are tactical, positive drivers of staff engagement which helps to ensure that everyone feels valued and involved, can contribute fully and can realize their potential. The Secretariat achieved a compliance rate of 87% for the 2022/2023 performance management cycle and over 99% of staff are meeting their performance objectives. Fully 81% of staff have set a learning objective that is focused on gender equality and women empowerment. In the 2023/2024 performance management cycle, 90% of staff have set their work and learning objectives.
41. To further strengthen its performance management culture, UNAIDS recently revised its performance management policy and incorporated some of those revisions in its ongoing 2023–2024 performance cycle. Key changes include providing more nuanced feedback by transitioning from a two-point to a four-point rating scale; clarifying results-based objectives; linking on-the-job learning and development; recognizing exceptional performance; and broadening the scope of targeted interventions to manage underperformance.
42. As part of its organizational transformation, UNAIDS is also fostering a culture of high-achievement and recognition of commitment to the HIV response. Launched in 2023, the new "Rewards and recognition" programme acknowledges staff contributions and commitment to the HIV response and provides a platform for recognizing exceptional performance. Team-wide awards acknowledge outstanding achievements in mobilizing partnerships and delivering programmes that address inequalities and long-service awards celebrate individual years-of-service milestones. A total of 290 staff were honoured this year for reaching milestones of 10 to 25 years and were recognized in a video highlighting their achievements during a "townhall" event.

Figure 5. Data on service milestone recognition

Gender representation on service milestones



Number of people reaching milestones per region



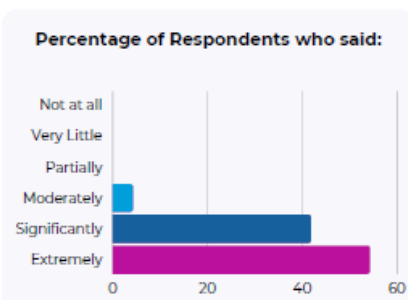
Source: UNAIDS SDP, April 2024

Leadership development

43. Investments in leadership development at the UNAIDS Secretariat align with key organizational priorities, including partnership building, influencing and knowledge management that is focused on collaborative skills. Innovative platforms for knowledge-sharing, capacity building through blended learning programmes and feedback mechanisms bolstered with executive coaching have supported the development and growth of inclusive leadership in 2023.
44. The Secretariat continues to implement and expand programmes for UCDs to hone their functional competencies, reinforce skills for diverse and collaborative leadership and foster common understanding about UNAIDS’s role and relevance within the broader UN country programming systems. The blended learning programme, “Leading for Transformational Change programme for UNAIDS Leaders,” which was developed in collaboration with the UN Staff College, concluded its first iteration in summer 2023. The first cohort consisted of 26 participants, with an 80% completion rate. In fall 2023, a second cohort of 57 leaders was launched. All participants have recommended the programme.

Figure 6. Survey results from the "Leading for Transformational Change" programme for UNAIDS leaders

How satisfied are you with the overall quality of the programme?



- “This was a novel, extremely useful and rich programme. I think this programme responded precisely to many chronic questions of us. It is essential for all UCDS. I, however, highly recommend this course for anybody who is in transformation leadership position.”
- “The platform and the learning proposal and methodology is excellent.”

Source: UNAIDS SDP, April 2024

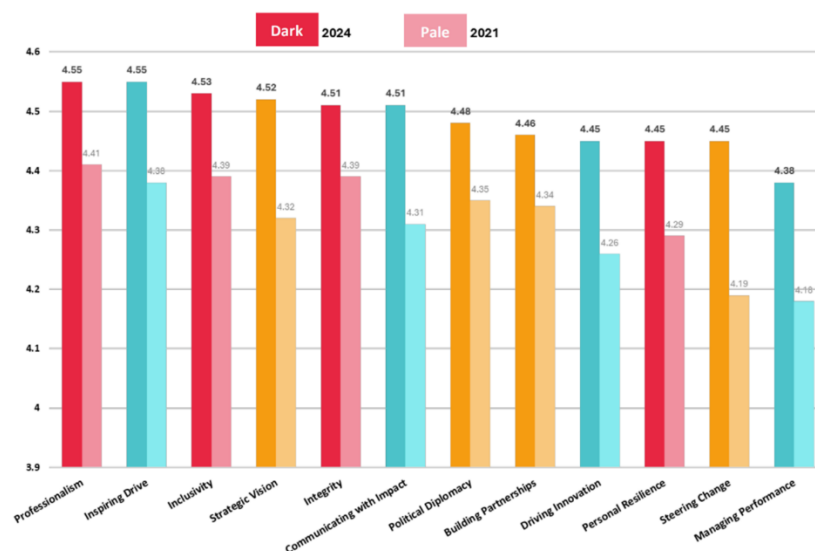
45. In October 2023, UNAIDS launched the Knowledge Exchange Network and Talent Pool for UNAIDS Country

Directors (UCDNet). Developed collaboratively, UCDnet serves as an electronic forum for communication and support to this leadership cadre and provides a space for both formal and informal engagement and knowledge sharing. UCDnet is modelled after the Resident Coordinator system and comprises all serving UCDs (international and

national), as well as all candidates who have passed the UCD Assessment Centre. In preparation for the anticipated high volume of turnover of UCDs in 2024, UCDNet provides a key platform for transition planning, institutional knowledge, and support to new leaders.

46. To empower leaders by boosting their professional skills in key strategic priority areas, UNAIDS launched the second edition of the 360-degree management assessment in 2023. One-hundred-and-ten UNAIDS staff members participated. Compared to the first edition's findings, there have been notable improvements in most competencies. The three in which staff were: inclusivity, professionalism and steering change. All the average ratings on these competencies improved from 2021 to 2023.
47. A well-being index was developed, based on 20 questions, to gauge leadership capacity to maintain staff well-being and psychological safety in their teams. The average score was 4.45 out of 5, indicating a reasonably strong overall position. Regarding collective development areas, the competency with the most room for improvement was managing performance, which received an average rating of 4.38 (up from 4.18 in 2021).
48. Feedback generated through the survey is complemented with an executive coaching programme to support participant learning needs. Stronger interventions are planned in 2024 to strengthen the performance culture.

Figure 7. Mean competency ratings from the 360-degree assessment (October 2023)

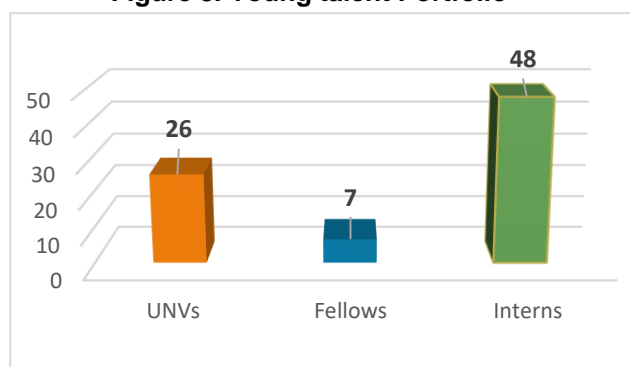


Source: UNAIDS SDP, April 2024

49. Launched in 2024, UNAIDS's tailored performance management coaching programme empowers new managers to manage team performance and provide coaching for staff members on a performance improvement plan. With a focus on individualized support, each manager received four hours of dedicated coaching. Staff members on improvement plans also received personalized guidance from an external professional coach with an emphasis on rapport-building and problem-solving discussions in collaboration with their managers.

50. UNAIDS remains steadfast in its commitment to foster the next generation of leaders in the HIV response. In 2023, fellowship programmes sponsored by Germany, Italy and Belgium placed four fellows at Country Offices. In February 2024, Staff Development and Performance initiated the first in a series of "OpenDoors webinars" focusing on engaging LGBTQ+ university students and encouraging their involvement with the UNAIDS internship programme. With 48 global participants, the webinar established an initial communication channel to facilitate future engagements and create internship opportunities at UNAIDS.

Figure 8. Young talent Portfolio



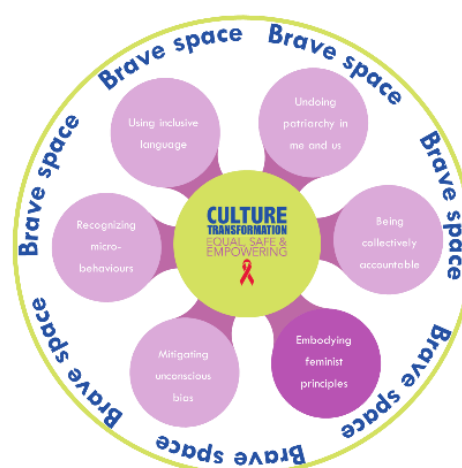
51. Preparations are ongoing to launch the UNAIDS "Young Leadership Fellowship" programme in 2025 as a pilot initiative to reach out to young people from key populations. Through this fellowship, UNAIDS will create opportunities to build and strengthen personal and community leadership skills, and to foster a vibrant network of change leaders within UNAIDS.

Enhancing gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion and antiracism

52. Inclusivity, equity and diversity are at the heart of the Global AIDS Strategy. These principles are also central to the UNAIDS Secretariat's commitment to an equal, safe and empowering workplace. In 2023, key initiatives included the development and application of team value charters, the expansion of the antiracism plan and the launch of "Team Learning Journey" programme.

53. Feminist principles anchor the organization's cultural transformation and promote an equitable workplace where staff, in all their diversity, are afforded equal opportunities and are treated fairly. To operationalize the feminist principles, 45 teams across UNAIDS Secretariat, including the Cabinet, have developed "team value charters". These help to articulate norms around ways of working and define boundaries that contribute to managing workloads.

54. Antiracism principles also undergird the cultural transformation process. In 2023, UNAIDS reviewed and expanded its antiracism plan to align with the UN Secretariat Strategic Action Plan against Racism. Interactive staff dialogues facilitated by antiracism experts were convened on major international commemorative days informed by findings from the Global Staff Survey and the 2022 Joint Inspection Unit review of the response to racism in the UN workplace. The expanded antiracism plan includes actions to address racism within institutional operations and management practices, systems and internal justice processes.



55. Building on those key principles, the "Team Learning Journey" was launched during an internal

staff dialogue on privilege and allyship held on Nelson Mandela International Day. The "Team Learning Journey" builds on the introduction of "Brave Space" principles to address ways to: embody feminist principles; mitigate unconscious bias; recognize micro-behaviours; use inclusive language; undo internalized patriarchy; and be collectively accountable. Sessions encourage interactive learning in three phases: reflection, conversation and action to ensure retention and to complement the learning.

56. Supporting this work, 22 internal cofacilitators received week-long, experiential, in-person training in 2023. In collaboration with their Regional Directors, these facilitators are now leading cultural transformation programming to mainstream the feminist and antiracist principles across the organization, including building "Brave Spaces" for teams to enable change at UNAIDS.
57. UNAIDS leadership exemplifies the organization's commitment to these principles. In November 2023, the UNAIDS Executive Director signed the Geneva Declaration on Antiracism, thereby committing to 16 actionable pledges. The Executive Director also convened key high-level meetings, including hosting a dialogue on racism with the President of the Republic of Ghana in collaboration with the UN Senior African Group in commemoration of the 2023 International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination and the International Day of Remembrance of the Victims of Slavery and the Transatlantic Slave Trade.
58. In 2023, a representative steering committee—comprised of Cabinet, colleagues living with HIV (UN PLUS), Country Directors from all regions, and key Global Centre departments—was established to guide and provide oversight to the development of a comprehensive, intersectional gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion and accessibility framework. The framework builds on the 2018–2023 Gender Action Plan and will serve as a key instrument to affirm UNAIDS's vision of a diverse and inclusive organization.
59. Efforts are underway to address areas where gaps remain. The 2022 global staff survey and the 2023 workforce diversity survey provide baselines against which the organization will assess its progress, including on increased staff diversity, staff confidence and trust, and perspectives on inclusivity within the organization. A significant increase in the response rate to the anonymous workforce survey (63% of staff members responded in 2023 compared to 38% in 2022) suggests greater confidence and trust among staff.

Leveraging new ways of working

60. UNAIDS Secretariat continues to use new ways of working to support a bold, knowledge-driven network that can better facilitate teamwork and build partnerships. Key achievements include the implementation of the knowledge management strategy, the establishment of communities of practice, the launch of the new UNAIDS digital strategy, and progress on process optimization for efficiency.
61. These new ways of working complement broader UN Reform efforts such as UN 2.0, a series of reforms launched by the Secretary-General to ensure that the UN is agile, adaptable and innovative through its focus on innovation, data, digital foresight, behaviour science skills and culture.

Knowledge management strategy implementation

62. The UNAIDS Secretariat Knowledge Management Strategy was approved in November 2022 with its first full 12 months of implementation occurring during this reporting period. The Strategy addresses critical performance gaps under three pillars: knowledge capture/creation; knowledge sharing/dissemination; and knowledge acquisition/application.
63. The Strategy is operationalized through an action plan which outlines specific deliverables for the first two years. Of the 13 projects which had been scheduled to begin in 2023, eight have been completed and four were on-track. One was behind schedule, though implementation was underway.
64. Key achievements under the Strategy in 2023 included:
- **Improved capture of tacit knowledge for organizational learning.** A "learning from leavers" programme has been developed to contribute to institutional memory and transition planning. As part of the programme, which will be launched in 2024, staff leaving the organization will be able to volunteer to participate in interviews made available to staff on online training platforms.
 - **Enhanced capacity for knowledge management across the Secretariat.** A tailored knowledge management module was developed and delivered to 321 staff as part of training on new ways of working. Knowledge management modules were integrated into 100% of planned organizational training initiatives for 2023.
 - **Investments in and expansion of resources to support collaboration and exchange of information across the organization.** New tools for cross-organization collaboration, including Microsoft Viva Engage, were introduced. Expansion of existing resources, including investments in translation services, also support cross-exchange and dissemination of information across our global communities.
 - **Improved access to organization's existing content.** Improved cross-departmental access to electronic file systems was implemented to remove barriers to knowledge-sharing. Training programmes, including a taxonomy of UNAIDS Secretariat, were created to support staff in identifying areas of overlap to facilitate knowledge and uptake of existing resources.
 - **Creation of communities of practice as a central way of working** (see below).

Communities of practice

65. Four communities of practice were launched at the end of 2022 and serve as critical architecture to support UNAIDS's new ways of working: "Equality and rights for all"; "Science, systems and services for all"; "Equitable financing"; and "Data for impact".
66. The "Equality and rights for all" and the "Science, systems and services for all" communities of practice convened a series of virtual discussions and topic-based webinars across the organization that were geared to connect policy and practice. The Equitable financing community of practice is developing a new knowledge product that will capture and share policy positions on strategic topics. The "Data for impact" community of practice has established infrastructure to promote collaboration, including by convening quarterly meetings of the practice, developing and consistently updating tools sites that provide for intersessional engagement, and running training workshops. As part of its key initiative, this community of practice organizes biennial workshops on HIV estimates to maintain and enhance organizational knowledge.
67. Building on the infrastructure of these initial communities of practice and in accordance with a guidance note circulated in May 2023, additional internal communities of practice have been established. They include a "Joint Programme" group; a "UNAIDS Country

Director-Network", "Staff development and performance" group, a "Science and UNAIDS" group, a "Technical Support Mechanism" group, a "Data advisory" group, a "Digital enthusiasts" group, and a "Global partnerships" group. The communities of practice receive dedicated support from the knowledge management group.

68. The UNAIDS Secretariat also supports a growing number of external communities of practice, including the launch in 2023 of the Asia-Pacific learning network on sustainable financing of community-led responses and the Asia-Pacific learning network on community-led monitoring. These communities of practice are open to diverse stakeholders, including governments, community-led organizations, civil society, and bilateral/multilateral partners in the Asia-Pacific region.

Digital strategy

69. Launched in 2023, UNAIDS's digital strategy contributes to its mission to end AIDS by providing digital solutions to transform the way we work, implement knowledge management, improve efficiencies, and introduce digital innovations to increase impact. As a critical component of delivering the People and Knowledge Management strategies, the digital strategy focuses on five areas of work.
- **Maximizing the value of data.** An integrated data platform is being established, drawing on data across the organization to develop tools and visualizations to best support UNAIDS and its stakeholders.
 - **Innovating processes and systems.** Optimized processes and user-centric solutions are reducing the administrative burden across the organization.
 - **Building digital programme capacity.** The implementation of digital programmes, including generative Artificial Intelligence solutions for collaboration and communities of practice, enables knowledge management and facilitates new ways of working.
 - **Ensuring a safe and secure technology environment.** Modern, secure platforms complemented and a strong focus on cybersecurity awareness to reduce organizational risk.
 - **Enhancing staff digital literacy.** Regular learning sessions and practical guidance on the use of technology support staff to maximize the tools at their disposal to deliver results.
70. Strategy implementation is monitored through a newly established governance mechanism with representation from across the organization.

Process optimization

71. The "Process optimization project": was launched in October 2023. This initiative aims to streamline and improve the efficiency of various administrative processes for people, including recruitment, procurement, asset management and global information technology services. The project maps current workflows, identifies bottlenecks and develops solutions to leverage technology, automation and best practices in order to streamline administrative processes, reduce errors and enhance transparency and accountability. Progress on the initiatives has begun and will be accelerated in 2024.
72. Key objectives for this initiative are:
- recruitment time reduced from 6.5 months to less than 4 months;
 - improved and more equitable information and communication technology service delivery in countries to reduce delivery time from four-to-five months to a few weeks and ensure that all UNAIDS staff are provided with adequate digital services;

- delegation of authority for procurement to eliminate redundancies and streamline approval processes in up to 33% of all contracts;
- streamline the process to recruit consultants to permit faster onboarding and engagement on noncore projects; and
- revise the asset management policy to significantly reduce the administrative burden and enhance tracking and monitoring.

Enforcing respectful conduct and zero tolerance

73. In March 2023, the new WHO/UNAIDS Policy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct was adopted, providing for an all-encompassing policy framework that covers all types of sexual misconduct, including sexual harassment that previously had been covered by the WHO/UNAIDS Policy on Preventing and Addressing Abusive Conduct (Abusive Conduct Policy). Accordingly, a revised version of the Abusive Conduct Policy, covering harassment (excluding sexual harassment), discrimination and abuse of authority (collectively, “abusive conduct”) was issued in June 2023.
74. The implementation of both policies continues to be rolled out. In July 2023, UNAIDS launched an all-staff webinar on the sexual misconduct policy. To further socialize the new policy, UNAIDS created new materials as part of the multiyear #RESPECT campaign to raise awareness about abusive conduct, including infographics on reporting and disclosure, as well as frequently asked questions about the policy.
75. Following development by WHO of a new code of conduct for events, UNAIDS also launched the “Code of conduct to prevent abusive conduct and sexual misconduct at UNAIDS events and gatherings.” This code is based on existing policies and outlines unacceptable behaviours, along with reporting mechanisms and safeguards against retaliation. From 1 May 2024, all events organized by or for UNAIDS will disseminate this code of conduct to participants.¹
76. Noting that WHO provides administrative services to UNAIDS, in accordance with the relevant WHO legal framework and specifically the WHO Staff Regulations and Rules, as adapted for the operational needs of UNAIDS, reference is also made to the relevant reports concerning amendments to the WHO Staff Regulations and Staff Rules; the Report of the International Civil Service Commission as submitted by WHO to the 154th session of its Executive Board; and to the relevant sections of the Report of the Program Budget and Administration Committee of the WHO Executive Board concerning the implementation, as of February 2024, of the revised post-adjustment multiplier for the duty station Geneva.
77. The People Management Department continues to work closely with the ombudsperson and other stakeholders, including the Ethics Office, to ensure duty of care, support consistent policy application, facilitate due diligence and contribute to early and informal conflict resolution.
78. To enhance transparency and accountability, updates on administrative review cases and corrective administrative actions, including disciplinary measures, are shared annually with UNAIDS Secretariat staff. These are also available to the PCB as conference room papers.

¹ The Code of Conduct is available on the UNAIDS website:

<https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/documents/2024/code-conduct-events-gatherings>

79. In 2023, 10 requests for administrative review were received from UNAIDS Secretariat members globally, in addition to eight new appeals which were filed before the WHO Global Board of Appeals by serving or former UNAIDS staff members. Further information, including a breakdown of cases by grade and gender of staff members, is available in the conference room paper, "UNAIDS Internal justice system, administrative review process—Annual statistical report 2023" (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/CRP5).
80. In 2023, UNAIDS concluded eight proceedings related to allegations of misconduct against UNAIDS staff members, of which five cases led to the imposition of disciplinary or other corrective measures. Further, detailed information is available in the conference room paper, "Corrective administrative actions including disciplinary measures imposed in 2023" (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/CRP6).
81. Additional reporting on key metrics is included in the Organizational Oversight Reports.

Supporting staff well-being and engagement

82. UNAIDS remains committed to ensuring the well-being and engagement of its staff, including through efforts to provide an equal, safe and empowering work culture. In 2023, staff still faced increases in workloads given resource constraints, unfilled positions and the necessary acceleration of efforts to achieve the Global AIDS Strategy mid-point targets. The UNAIDS alignment and cultural transformation processes are designed to support staff to deliver quality work and foster a culture of well-being in the face of these challenges.
83. UNAIDS has reprioritized to operate within a reduced budget by adopting a sharper focusing effort in the UBRAF, and associated workplans and budgets around four strategic institutional priorities: HIV prevention, treatment gaps, community led responses and sustainability. During 24–26 January 2024, the entire organization participated in the first quarterly stock-taking exercise. Teams analysed available capacity and developed realistic, but ambitious priorities for the first quarter of the 2024–2025 biennium. As part of the finalization of the departmental biennium workplans and budgets, each department submitted a list of activities that will be deprioritized or dropped all together.
84. Managers remain linchpins for supporting staff on work demands, ensuring appropriate division of tasks and addressing and alerting senior management to issues of unsustainable overwork culture. During the stocktaking period, managers met with each team member individually to discuss their own workload, strategies for tailored support and progress on PALM objectives. Accountability objectives on workload management were added to the performance appraisals of all managers. Team value charters and "learning journeys" continue to support teams in developing their own working norms to best support each other as they manage their workloads. Teams have been asked to institute agreements on coordinating leave days, reaching agreements on work hours, and blocking lunch periods to support well-being throughout the workday. *No-meeting Fridays* have been established to ensure that, where possible, staff have a full day each week with minimal interruptions to focus on priorities in their own work. These strategies have contributed to the impressive 98% completion rate of mandatory learning and training courses in January 2024.
85. Expansion and uptake of existing work-life balance resources, allowances, and tools forms a critical component of workload management strategies. For example, the flexible working arrangement policy and guidelines, as well as related provisions of the

staff rules on attendance and leave, provide staff with allowances to manage working time in relation to the other aspects of their lives. The strategies also promote adherence to improved ways of working, including communication etiquette and technologies to support collaboration without overburdening staff.

86. Workload management and compliance with recommended measures will continue to be monitored by the senior leadership team and the duty-of-care committee. Workload-related questions will be integrated into the upcoming global staff survey and the findings will be reported to the PCB at the 56th session in June 2025.
87. UNAIDS is committed to ongoing efforts to create a work culture that is equal, safe and empowering. To address the results of the 2022/2023 global staff survey, multiple action plans were implemented to address priorities in each region and each of the Global Centre Departments. At the end of 2023, 96% of actions had been completed or were in-progress.
88. The pulse survey was implemented in February 2024 to measure progress in priority areas and the impact of the regional or departmental action plans that had been implemented in 2023. Eleven questions from the global staff survey were selected to build the pulse survey, including two questions on overall leadership by UNAIDS Cabinet and a respectful workplace. Two new questions were added, one focused on staff engagement with knowledge management interventions, and the other on progress made in the previous 12 months. Five other questions were added to ensure that the priorities of regions and departments were fully addressed.
89. Initial findings indicate that:
 - 62% of all respondents were positive, which suggests good progress made on most of the core questions in comparison to the 2022 global staff survey results. The areas with most progress were communication, commitment, role and overall leadership by the Cabinet, and the overall staff engagement index (by 10%).
 - The only question that showed negative growth compared to the 2022 results was on “Regional and Departmental leaders leading by example”. Respondents gave a high score at 70%, indicating a mostly positive outlook, but there is clearly room for improvement.
 - In response to the question “What has been the most positive change over the past 12 months”, 19% of respondents indicated “learning and development” as a positive change, while 17% highlighted “collaboration and clear communication”.

Figure 9. UNAIDS-wide responses to the core pulse survey questions

Source: UNAIDS SDP, Pulse report, April 2024.

90. To further support staff mental health and well-being, UNAIDS has invested in an overarching support framework/architecture. UNAIDS was actively involved in the development of the new system-wide Mental Health and Well-being Strategy and is represented on the Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Implementation Board. The core elements of the new Strategy are aimed at preventing risks to mental health at work, promoting and protecting workforce mental health, and supporting workers with mental health conditions. UNAIDS has developed its own forward-looking Strategy for 2024–2028, which integrates and builds on all services involved in workforce well-being and mental health, and links with associated services of WHO.
91. The UNAIDS staff counsellor provides services for both individuals and teams to address a wide range of personal and professional issues affecting staff, such as stress, burnout in relation to workloads, interpersonal conflict, job insecurity, decentralization/adjustment to remote work, health issues, bereavement and family concerns. Psychosocial crisis management also supports individuals and teams who are experiencing stressors in the context of emergency situations. Additional resources, including the Headspace mindfulness app, benefit staff and emphasize well-being on an ongoing basis.
92. UNAIDS staff are also supported by the Office of the Ombudsperson and Mediation Services. The focus of the ombudsperson's efforts to support the UNAIDS workforce is the prevention and informal resolution of work-related issues and interpersonal conflicts, including through facilitated dialogue processes or mediation.

93. The Secretariat fully complies with the UN Security Risk Management process, which is monitored through an online dashboard and linked to the preparation of the biennial work planning and budget cycle. A baseline survey for all UNAIDS offices assessing security risk management measures has enabled deficiencies related to security standards to be identified and addressed. Furthermore, occupational health and safety situations in Country and Regional Offices are regularly assessed and tailored recommendations are provided. UNAIDS is currently recruiting a new P5 Security Advisor to continue this important work.
94. The next global staff survey will be conducted in early 2025. It is expected to offer further insights on staff attitudes regarding the alignment and culture transformation process. Results will be reported in the human resources management report to the PCB at its 56th session in June 2025.

Conclusion

95. Throughout the reporting period, the UNAIDS Secretariat built on and advanced the progress made towards ensuring that its staff have the support they need, work in an enabling work environment and can rely on advantageous policies so they can give their best each day to deliver on UNAIDS mandate. Monitoring of the impact of the organizational transformation effort is ongoing and measures are being put in place to sustain progress made. The organizational change agenda requires a long-term approach to facilitate a lasting transformation for a safe, networked and knowledge-driven organization. The Secretariat remains committed to taking swift corrective action where and when it becomes aware of areas where it is falling short of its aspiration.

Proposed Decision Points

The Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

96. *Take note* of the update on strategic human resource management issues.

[Annex follows]

Annex: Implementation of the People Strategy 2023–2026

A. Priority 1: Investing in learning, development and growth

Status	Action	Timeline	Progress to date	Next steps, key milestones
	Multiyear "Team Learning Journey"	January 2023 – December 2025	20 internal cofacilitators selected and trained to deliver the "Team Learning Journey" sessions across the organization. Roll out module 1 (embodying our feminist principles and creating a "brave space") started at Bonn, AP & EECA Region, ESA, LAC, UCO Kenya, GC Geneva.	Review the "Team Learning Journey" and integrate with other staff learning and development initiatives (May 2024) to complete roll out (February – April 2024).
	Inventory of expertise and skills mapped to roles	2024–2025	Preparation ongoing to procure services for skill mapping and defining key position/functional priorities.	RFP launch in July 2024. Provider contracted and strategy finalized December 2024.
	Staff development fund resourced to support staff to update and broaden technical and operational skills.	2023–2024	Launched 2023. The "SkillAdvance" programme was swiftly implemented to provide quick micro-lessons created by experts across the organization in order to enhance technical and operational skills specifically tailored to UNAIDS staff. On PALM, additional customized learning playlists were launched—including "Essential Skills for Managers"; "Leadership Skills for UCDs"; "Media Training"; and "ZeroTolerance: Empowering Voices	2024 new modules being developed. Review onboarding self-paced modules and strengthen onboarding sessions (ongoing). Include new learning on the "Gender equality at UNAIDS" course, making it mandatory. Socialize UNAIDS's value proposition, offering in-depth understanding of funding model, organizational ethos, and mission. PM learning sessions: key areas identified from the "360" report,

			and Ending Harassment"—to further support staff development	<p>qualitative assessments of work objectives recorded in planning task reports and focus group meetings to define gaps. (Launch of sessions in September 2024)</p> <p>Explore and strengthen UCD skill profiles based on learning gaps identified through the UCD assessment centres. (Final quarter 2024)</p>
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B. Priority 2: Enhancing gender-equality, diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racism

Status	Action	Timeline	Progress to date	Next steps, key milestones
	Functional teams create value charters to agree on norms.	July 2023 – Dec 2024	<p>Increase in number of teams that have developed values charters in 2023 (from 27 to 45).</p> <p>Stock-taking days provided time for teams to assess and application of the charters.</p>	Teams to revise Charters as they participate in module 1 of "Teams Learning Journey" to – incorporate aspects of feminist principles.
	Development of an intersectional gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion, accessibility, and anti-racism framework.	July 2023 – July 2025	Cabinet endorsed and sponsor identified.	Establish a steering committee to oversee and guide development of the framework.
	Guidance for antiracist programming and policy development promulgated and applied to processes.	July 2023 – July 2025	UNAIDS reviewed and expanded its antiracism plan to align with the UN Secretariat Strategic Action Plan against Racism. Interactive staff dialogues facilitated by antiracism experts were	

			convened on major international commemorative days.	
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C. Priority 3: Supporting staff well-being and engagement

Status	Action	Timeline	Progress to date	Next steps, key milestones
	Creation and implementation of the UNAIDS/WHO Workforce Mental Health and Well-being Strategy 2023–2028.	2023 – 2025	Implementation plan (2023–2025) development initiated in June 2023 in line with launch of UN-wide mental health strategy adopted. Draft implementation plan developed. Scorecard completed and informing developing of implementation Plan.	Finalize and disseminate among staff. Key milestone for 2024? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> mental health campaign leading to Mental Health Month October 2024? Psychosocial assessment (end of 2025). Review of "Lead and Learn" programme for senior management?
	Development of an internal communications plan.	2023 – 2025	Launched in October 2023. First three-day stock-taking conducted in January 2024 with uptake from majority of teams across UNAIDS as reported by SLT; CT IF; DoC Committee. Outcomes: increased number of teams with values charters; 95% compliance rate with mandatory training; no global meetings on Fridays. Second stock-taking period carried out on April 16–8, 2024.	Implementation throughout 2024. Next stock-taking period planned for July 2024.
	Development and implementation of action plans based on global staff	2024 – 2025	Eight action plans responding to 2022 GSS findings developed;	Review and update GSS Action Plan and People Strategy, based on outcomes of pulse survey.

	surveys to address areas for improvement.		implementation of action plans monitored quarterly. Pulse survey conducted in February 2024, report available.	
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D. Priority 4: Building capacity to deliver

Status	Action	Timeline	Progress to date	Next steps, key milestones
	Strengthened digital literacy, skills, innovation, guided by the Knowledge Management Strategy.	2024 – 2025	KM and digital skills training provided. Communities of Practice (COP) established and active on "Viva Engage". KM, digital and data strategies developed and being implemented.	Providing digital solutions and training opportunities in response to CoP needs. Further develop knowledge sharing culture by strengthening COPs. Enhanced use of Teams across the organization.
	Knowledge and behavioural competencies developed to contribute to effective partnerships and advocacy.	2024 – 2025	The knowledge and behavioural competencies developed within the partnerships and influencing module contribute to effective partnerships and advocacy efforts by enhancing understanding of influencing strategies, fostering a common approach, and equipping individuals with skills to amplify influence for collective success. These are competencies addressed in "Leading for Transformational Change+ and foundational self-paced module on "skillAdvance" programme for all staff.	Introducing an immersive "Deep Dive" course on partnerships and influencing (2024–2025).

	Rewards and recognition programme introduced to acknowledge individual and team achievements.	2023 – 2024	Rewards and recognition programme launched for Teams, Service milestone certificates launched and staff recognized for service years since 1 January 2019.	Regularized in 2024 for on-going recognition of service milestones Rewards and team recognition program launched for the pilot year, results scheduled for announcement in June, 2024.
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E. Priority 5: Ensuring respectful conduct and zero tolerance

Status	Action	Timeline	Progress to date	Next steps, key milestones
	Review and identification of needs and opportunities to strengthen the Secretariat's safeguarding procedures through an action plan.	2024	Ecosystem and synergies identification under way.	
	Adequate staffing of the Ethics Office and Office of the Ombudsperson, as well as strengthened resources to support informal conflict resolution, prevention and early intervention.	2024	Recruitment under way.	
	Implementation of the memorandum of understanding with the WHO Office of Internal Oversight Services monitored, and issues identified promptly addressed.	2024	Memorandum of understanding (MoU) in place. Reviewing adaptation and considering additional support to IOS for investigations.	

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