

# MANAGEMENT RESPONSE

## Organizational oversight reports

**Additional documents for this item:**

Report of the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for 2023 (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.14);

Report of the External Auditor (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.15);

Report of the Ethics Office (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.16);

Report of the Independent External Oversight Advisory Committee (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.17).

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

- *Take note* of the report of the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for 2023;
- *Accept* the External Auditor's report for the financial year ended 31 December 2023;
- *Take note* of the report of the Ethics Office;
- *Welcome* the report of the UNAIDS Independent External Oversight Advisory Committee and *look forward* to the next report in 2025; and
- *Take note* of management's response to the organizational oversight reports.

**Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions:** *none*

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## Introduction

1. This document contains the UNAIDS management's response to the organizational oversight reports and should be read in conjunction with the following documents: "Report of the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for 2023" (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.14); "Report of the External Auditor" (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.15); "Report of the Ethics Office" (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.16); and "Report of the Independent External Oversight Advisory Committee (IEOAC)" (UNAIDS/PCB (54)/24.17). This report also includes an analysis of the implementation of recommendations from the Joint Inspection Unit's (JIU) reports for 2023.
2. Management welcomes the recommendations of the oversight bodies that support UNAIDS in continuously improving its policies, procedures and effectiveness, as well as guaranteeing the well-being of the staff, affiliated personnel and the communities we serve, and ensuring the results of the Joint Programme.
3. Management expresses its gratitude to the managers and administrative staff across the Secretariat, specifically at the field level, whose ongoing efforts have been instrumental in the significant achievements that clearly demonstrate an enhanced culture of accountability and management of resources, most notably:
  - **Audit recommendations.** All 12 outstanding reports from 2018 to 2021 were closed; 105 recommendations were closed, including 30 with high residual risks; and the number of past due recommendations decreased by 69% (and by 92% compared to 2020).
  - **Assets.** An in-depth analysis by each office identified actions required to fully clean up their asset registers. To date details of over 2,000 assets have been updated.
  - Non-commercial agreements. A 47% reduction in overdue reports was achieved.
4. In addition to responses to oversight reports, UNAIDS management presents an overview of actions taken to further strengthen internal controls and organizational accountability and ensure more effective use of resources.
5. Management remains committed to safeguarding the staff, affiliated personnel and communities we work with against sexual misconduct, abuse and harassment. To that end, management has strengthened recruitment procedures, the assessment of implementing partners and enhanced training and accountability for managers.
6. Management considers the independence of the Ethics Office an asset and appreciates its contributions to mainstream sound practices through the review of policies and procedures on communications, recruitments, staff training and other key areas of UNAIDS's operations and staff regulations.

## External Audit activities in 2023

7. The management of UNAIDS recognizes and wishes to express its appreciation to the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General of India for their support to UNAIDS via the independent External Audit service they provide.
8. The External Auditor audited the UNAIDS financial statements for the year ended 31 December 2023 and performed a compliance audit at the Geneva Global Centre.
9. UNAIDS financial statements have been prepared in compliance with the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and in accordance with the Financial Regulations and Rules of the World Health Organization (WHO).

10. Management is pleased to note that the External Auditor issued an “unmodified”, or clean, opinion on the UNAIDS financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.
11. Pursuant to their financial and compliance audit, the External Auditor issued three new recommendations relating to compliance. Management’s responses to the audit recommendations are outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1. Management’s responses to External Audit observations and recommendations**

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Management’s response</b>
<p><b>Recommendation 1:</b></p> <p>Management may ensure timely creation, updating and monitoring of the business continuity plan in all its offices.</p>	<p>Management accepts the recommendation.</p> <p>Building upon the existing business continuity plans and platform, management will coordinate regular updates from all offices.</p> <p>Projected timeline: by end-2024</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 2:</b></p> <p>Management may take the necessary action to revise the contract and ensure that final payment is made to the vendor after making necessary adjustments.</p>	<p>Management accepts the recommendation</p> <p>Required follow-up with the contractor will be done to amend the identified contract as required.</p> <p>Projected timeline: by end-June 2024</p>
<p><b>Recommendation 3:</b></p> <p>Management may follow up with offices where assets have been reported as “not found” and impress upon the offices to submit the disposal documents in cases where the assets are being retired.</p>	<p>Management accepts the recommendation</p> <p>Management will continue the follow-up with concerned offices to achieve a clean asset register.</p> <p>Projected timeline: by end-September 2024</p>

### Implementation of past External Audit recommendations

12. In their report, the External Auditor noted that, of the 10 past External Audit recommendations, seven were implemented, and three were under implementation as of 31 December 2023 (see Table 2 for details).

**Table 2. Past audit recommendations implemented**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Status</b>
Recommendation 2: We recommend that UNAIDS needs to take concrete steps to complete the verification of all assets and devise a mechanism to ensure that all assets are verified in a timely manner.	Implemented
Recommendation 3: We recommend that UNAIDS needs to discharge its payment obligations as per the terms of DFC agreement, and the reasons and justifications for release of funds not in conformity with the DFC provisions needs to be looked into.	Implemented
Recommendation 4: We recommend that UNAIDS needs to:	Implemented

Recommendation	Status
<p>a. Examine cases where staff are under UNDP/other Cosponsoring organization contract and have not submitted the travel claim, and to develop a mechanism so that the amount of unclaimed travel payments is recovered.</p> <p>b. Ensure that travel requests that are not in emergency circumstances are approved before the travel start date to ensure compliance with the extant travel regulations.</p>	
<p>Asset management</p> <p>We recommend that UNAIDS ensure incorporation of necessary controls in the Enterprise Resource Planning system to prevent delayed recording of assets.</p>	Implemented
<p>Ethics Office: While reporting the status of allegations received by the Ethics Office, the category "Other cases including misconduct", needs to be disaggregated to truly reflect the nature of the misconduct involved so that there is enhanced transparency and better monitoring.</p>	Implemented
<p>Key parameters, disclosed</p> <p>UNAIDS should ensure that the country data on key parameters, disclosed in various reports should be consistent, complete, accurate and comparable.</p>	Implemented
<p>Recommendation: We recommend that UNAIDS may consider evaluating the performance of contractors diligently and in a timely manner. As suggested by the Country Office, UNAIDS could develop an organization-wide online platform for contractors' performance evaluation.</p>	Implemented

13. Table 3 provides management's update on the recommendations under implementation, as of 31 December 2023).

**Table 3. Management update on recommendations under implementation, as of 31 December 2023**

Recommendation	External Auditor's assessment	Management's comments
<p>We recommend that UNAIDS needs to work in closer collaboration with SHI to ensure that the Actuary uses accurate demographic data for more accurate <b>actuarial valuation</b> in future periods.</p>	<p>Expected to be done in 2025 – open.</p>	<p>The next full actuarial valuation will be done in 2025 and close collaboration with SHI is already in place and will continue to ensure that an accurate demographic data is used.</p>

Recommendation	External Auditor's assessment	Management's comments
<p>Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF)</p> <p>UNAIDS may ensure reporting of all <b>performance indicators of the UBRAF</b> in the Performance Monitoring Report to reflect a comprehensive picture of the progress and to measure organizational performance quantitatively using the output indicators.</p>	<p>Performance Monitoring Report is in the link Performance monitoring (sharepoint.com)</p> <p>Since data regarding three criteria being received from country office is received late.</p> <p>In the biennium reporting this is done.</p> <p>In process.</p>	<p>The UNAIDS Performance Monitoring Report presents a comprehensive picture of the results achieved and organizational performance, including reporting against all the UBRAF performance output indicators.</p> <p>As planned, when the UBRAF indicators matrix was adopted by the PCB, for selected indicators for which data come from the Global AIDS Monitoring system, the data included in the report are the latest available, noting that the previous year's Global AIDS Monitoring data become available every year in August.</p> <p>Responding to the PCB request for a streamlined, shorter and integrated report, the information about the UBRAF indicators is captured as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ overview of progress against all UBRAF indicators in the PMR executive summary;</li> <li>▪ selected relevant indicators in the results report and report by region; and</li> <li>▪ detailed reporting against all indicators, for all years of the current 2022–2026 UBRAF, in the complementary UBRAF indicator scorecard, which is a conference room paper to the PCB.</li> </ul> <p>The reports submitted to this PCB allow us to close the recommendation.</p>

Recommendation	External Auditor's assessment	Management's comments
<p>Programme funding agreements</p> <p>UNAIDS may strengthen the regulation of <b>programme funding agreements</b> through:</p> <p>(a) incorporation of FENSA mechanism in the procurement manual,</p> <p>(b) use of assessment matrix to select proposals;</p> <p>(c) fixing timelines for returning of unspent balance by the implementing partners to UNAIDS; and</p> <p>(d) developing standard operating procedures for the conduct of assurance activities.</p>	<p>Action taken for (b) in the file "Selection proposal.pdf".</p> <p>(b) agreed. (a), (c) and (d) – open</p>	<p>The following will be rolled out in 2024:</p> <p>a) online partner assessment platform which includes FENSA related components;</p> <p>c) timelines for returning unspent balance; and</p> <p>d) standard operating procedures for assurance activities.</p> <p>Already implemented:</p> <p>b) assessment matrix to support non-commercial request for proposals rolled out in December 2023.</p>

### Internal Audit activities in 2023, recurrent audit findings and emerging risks

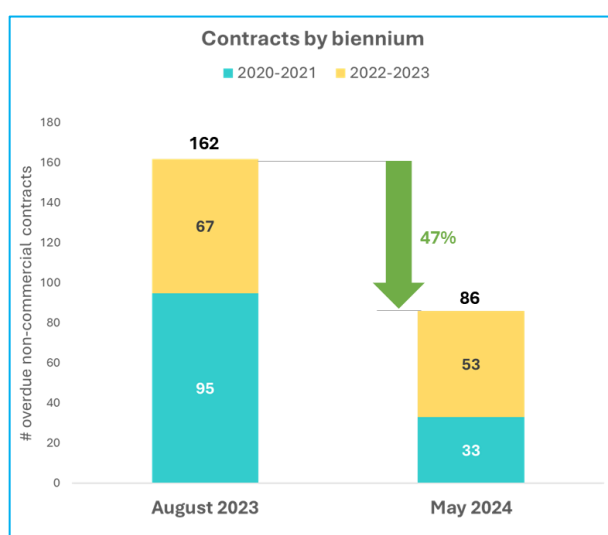
14. The management of UNAIDS recognizes and wishes to express its appreciation to the Office of Internal Oversight Service (IOS) of WHO for its continued support to UNAIDS through the provision of independent audit assurance.
15. Management is pleased to note that IOS reported an overall improvement in control effectiveness compared to 2022 (71% in 2023 compared to 55% in 2022). IOS also assessed three audit reports as "partially satisfactory with some improvement required", which, once again, is an improvement compared with 2022.
16. Offices and teams audited in 2023 are committed to addressing the audit findings and recommendations within agreed target deadlines, with the support of the Regional Support Teams and the Global Centre.
17. Management notes that the remaining area of high residual risk found in 2023 related to non-commercial contracts (programme funding agreements and direct financial contributions), which management will continue to address in a holistic manner as outlined in the paragraph below. In addition, management will implement targeted training, reinforce the payment clearance process, and publish new post-facto assurance activity operational procedures and guidance to support proactive monitoring.
18. Significant progress was made in 2023 to improve **the management and monitoring of non-commercial agreements** and the closure of overdue reports.<sup>1</sup>
  - The Executive Director issued a request to all staff to ask that efforts be reinforced to ensure the resolution of issues highlighted by IOS, including in the area of non-commercial agreements.

<sup>1</sup> Defined as not fully closed longer than three months after the project end-date, as per the UNAIDS financial and procurement rules and regulations.



- Based on an analysis by the UNAIDS compliance team targeted support was provided to individual UNAIDS Offices to outline and resolve issues relating to these non-commercial agreements.
- Corrective actions implemented include ongoing and regular communications with individual offices; provision of a live dashboard for daily updates on the status of the agreements; dedicated trainings to address the specific issues being faced for each office; and the provision of briefs and general guidance in addition to the information already provided in the UNAIDS procurement manual.
- These corrective actions resulted, as at 30 May, in an overall 47% decrease (from 162 to 86) of overdue agreements.<sup>2</sup> as shown in Figure 1.
- An enhanced implementing partners' capacity assessment platform has been developed, taking into account feedback from the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) NGO delegation, which will not only identify areas of risk where additional support may be required, but will also contribute to enhance transparency and information-sharing across the Secretariat.

**Figure 1. Closure of non-commercial agreements raised in 2020–2021 and 2022–2023**



**19. Post-facto assurance of DFC and PFA supporting documentation.** Management takes note of advice to adopt a more “holistic approach” to achieve sustainable improvements and will take the following actions during 2024:

- roll-out of post-facto assurance activity operational procedures and guidance to support the planning and recording of targeted follow up actions;
- additional clearance process step to verify all documents and planned assurance activities have been completed correctly prior to final payment being made; and
- training of all administrative staff to allow them to support partner’s correct completion of the final financial report (FACE template).

**20. Post-facto verifications.** The move from ex ante verification of each individual procurement (regardless of value) is designed to reinforce accountability, enhance efficiency and empower staff. Management takes note of the potential risks associated with any process change, and as such:

<sup>2</sup> Relates to non-commercial agreements from 2020 onward.

- ex-ante quality compliance check will continue for high value contracts and/or for newly appointed directors or administrative associates;
  - WHO Global Service Centre verifications will continue compliance checks on all procurements (unchanged); and
  - tailored training and support will be provided to address identified and specific needs of offices/units.
21. **Asset management.** Extensive measures to enhance asset management and clean up the asset register are currently ongoing. Based on the 2023 asset verification exercise data, a follow-up and full review of all disputed assets with each individual office has been undertaken and a final list of actions to be taken has been completed. These actions, supported by short-term surge capacity, are now being implemented.
22. **New WHO Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system.** Management takes note of the need for UNAIDS to adjust its systems and procedures to the new ERP's process flows. In this regard, management has recruited a dedicated project manager to coordinate with the WHO project team to ensure that UNAIDS focal points participate in all testing and verification workshops. Through participation at these events, scheduled to begin in the third quarter of 2024, UNAIDS will identify where process revisions will be required or internal controls enhanced, either in line with WHO revisions or as a modification that responds to a specific UNAIDS requirement.
23. **Resource mobilization.** For information related to steps taken to address the funding gap in a sustainable manner, please refer to UNAIDS's Resource Mobilization Strategy 2022–2026.

### Outcomes of investigations

24. Reference is made to the report of the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services (IOS) of WHO for 2023. In 2023, IOS received 27 new allegations involving UNAIDS staff and resources, compared with 17 in 2022. Management notes that nine of the 27 allegations received in 2023 were subject to a full investigation by IOS, while the other 18 were closed either at recording triage or following preliminary review.
25. Management also notes paragraph 34 of the report whereby, among 27 new allegations, 20 were closed during the reporting period. Where the allegations were found to be substantiated following investigation UNAIDS took appropriate corrective administrative action. For a comprehensive review of actions taken on investigative or other findings or irregular practices and conduct in 2023, reference is made to the annual report on corrective administrative action, including disciplinary measures imposed in 2023 (UNAIDS/PCB (54)CRP5).
26. In 2023, UNAIDS adopted in its entirety [the WHO Policy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct \(PASM\)](#). The policy launch on 8 March 2023 was followed by a number of WHO/UNAIDS information campaigns and briefings to staff. The policy is now routinely provided to all new UNAIDS staff members joining the organization and it serves as a basis for one of the mandatory training courses that must be completed by UNAIDS staff members. On 20 June 2023, UNAIDS fully adopted the revised and updated [Policy on Prevention of Abusive Conduct](#), including all instances of harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority, while “sexual harassment” became part of the PASM policy.
27. UNAIDS will continue with every effort to make UNAIDS a safe, equal and empowering workplace, with zero tolerance for sexual exploitation, abuse,

harassment and other forms of misconduct. Important progress have been made in strengthening its safeguarding oversight, improving policies and systems and transforming organizational culture (see the MOPAN report, 2023). Following review in 2023, a number of improvements are under implementation, including:

- strengthening of the Ethics Office;
- prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment has been included as mandatory training for staff and consultants;
- performance reviews include specific safeguarding related indicators for managers;
- an implementing partners assessment—as discussed with the PCB NGO delegation and which includes a module on protection from sexual exploitation, abuse and sexual harassment—is being rolled out;
- online footprint checks for all new recruits for staff positions has been instituted, and consultants are required to complete ethics and sexual abuse prevention online courses before being contracted; and
- social media guidelines are being updated.

28. In addition, UNAIDS has been pursuing its “#RESPECT” campaign, working closely with staff on promoting a respectful and safe workplace. UNAIDS staff members have also been able to access additional WHO resources, such as regular corporate open-door conversations with the WHO Department on Prevention and Addressing Sexual Misconduct and invited speakers. Awareness-raising initiatives, information and materials, as well as the mandatory obligation in the PASM policy to report any incidents of abusive conduct, including sexual misconduct, have likely contributed to the overall increase of instances of new allegations. Reference is made to the “Update on strategic human resources management issues”,<sup>3</sup> for more information on the initiatives and actions taken.

### Implementation of past Internal Audit recommendations

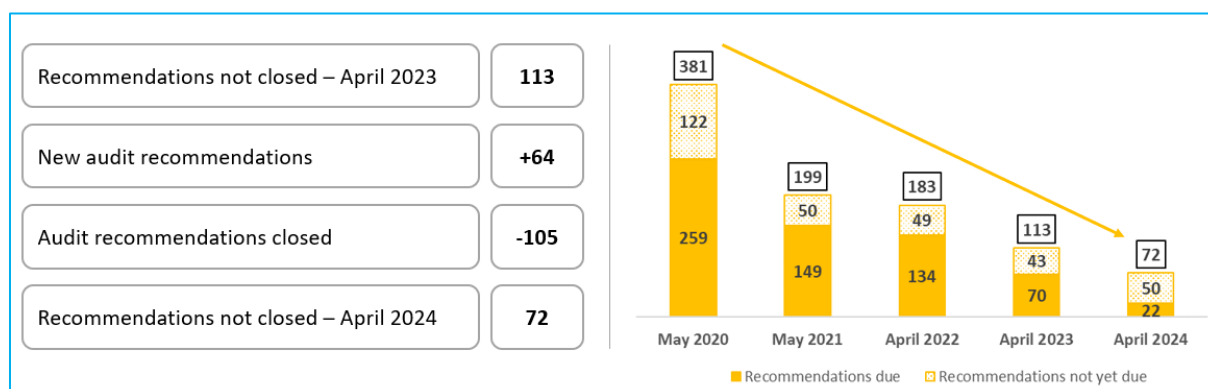
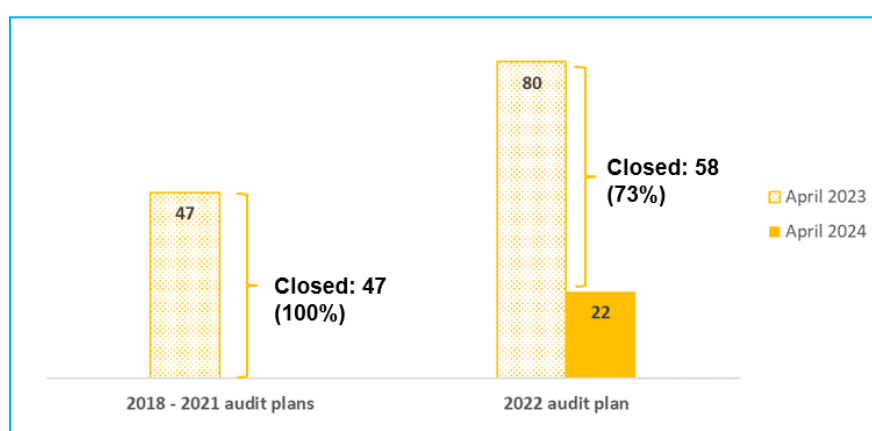
29. Management is pleased to report significant achievements in addressing past audits.

- Since last reporting to PCB, IOS closed 12 audits (a total of 105 audit recommendations, of which 30 high residual risk recommendations).
- The balance of recommendations not closed continued to decrease and stood at its lowest level since 2020.
- The number of recommendations open and past due decreased by 69% compared to last year, and by 92% compared to 2020 (Figure 2).
- All outstanding audits from the 2018, 2019, 2020 and 2021 audit work plans were closed during the year (Figure 3).
- Significant progress was achieved in closing audits from the 2022 audit plan (Figure 3).

30. Regular monitoring and support to offices to address audit recommendations will continue.

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<sup>3</sup> UNAIDS/PCB (52)/23.14

**Figure 2. Recommendations due and not due: year-on-year progress****Figure 3. Long-outstanding recommendations: progress achieved during the year**

### Management's response to the independent Ethics Office report

31. Management expresses its gratitude to the Ethics Office for its report and significant contributions in strengthening policy coherence and procedures to reflect the values to which UNAIDS is committed. The work of the Ethics Office is instrumental in providing staff and non-staff with a safe space to request confidential advice or seek support and protection.
32. Management welcomes the progress made in staff training and outreach on ethics issues. It has been a joint effort with the managers to ensure that all staff complete the training and is indicative of the organization's culture change.
33. The independence of the Ethics Office is an asset for UNAIDS and we welcome the increasing number of staff contacting the office. The job description and the recent vacancy notice for the ethics officer position states that "the term of the Head of Ethics is limited to a fixed-term period of four years and may be extended for an additional four years maximum. The selected candidate will not be eligible for any further employment at UNAIDS thereafter". The Head of Ethics has formal interactions with the Independent Expert Oversight Advisory Committee (IEOAC) and will agree with the committee on how to engage informally. The selection of the Head of Ethics is underway and the IEOAC will be kept apprized and its inputs will be sought during the process.

34. Management reaffirms its commitment to reinforce the Ethics office with additional staff (whose recruitment is under way), despite the significant financial constraints, and resources for activities with Country Offices.
35. Management welcomes the new policy on protection against retaliation that came into force in 2023, that underpins the UNAIDS zero-tolerance stance against retaliation of any kind. The recent “pulse survey” (2024) confirms that staff feels safer in reporting incidents compared to 2022, but more work is still needed in this area. The retaliation policy provides clear information about the role of the Ethics Office in preventive and protective measures against retaliation, and its role in coordination among IOS, People Management Department, Staff Health and Well-being and other services to protect the staff and affiliated personnel.

### Management’s response to the annual report of the Independent External Oversight Advisory Committee

36. Management expresses its appreciation to the members of the IEOAC for their report and the quality advice provided during the course of this reporting period.
37. **Financial reporting.** Management welcomes the Committee’s review of the modified fund balance with the minimum percentage of operating budget approved by the PCB, taking into account the reduced operating budget. Management further notes that the Committee regards as justified the decision to return US\$ 25.1 million (previously transferred per PCB decision in 2012) back to the core fund balance.
38. **UBRAF performance reporting.** Management appreciates that the committee recognizes the added value of the data on the Joint Programme's results and that the reports have systematically improved year by year and highlight UNAIDS’s vital contribution to the implementation of the Global AIDS Strategy, as well as its accountability. The Performance Monitoring Report is complemented by other communication products, such as country reports, visuals and infographics on selected topics. That and other information is featured on the UNAIDS Results and Transparency Portal (available at <https://open.unaids.org>), which complements the UNAIDS website. A new, attractive, user-friendly and dynamic version of the Portal will be launched by mid-2024, with updated content on programmatic results, performance and investments, as well as resource mobilization, with a focus on UNAIDS’s value proposition. It is hoped that the Performance Monitoring Report and Portal will be widely shared and used at country, regional and global levels to promote UNAIDS’s results and unique added value to the global AIDS response and to advocate for a fully funded UBRAF.
39. **Resource mobilization.** In an extremely difficult environment, management continues to pursue its [resource mobilization strategy](#) to retain and grow funds to UNAIDS. UNAIDS has provided the Committee with the key performance indicators which are used to track performance and it will provide the Committee with a report against these indicators at the end of this year. UNAIDS has been pursuing a Financing Campaign since its launch in early 2024. The Executive Director and Deputy Executive Directors have undertaken eight missions to key donors in Northern contexts. The Executive Director has also engaged significantly with Ambassadors in the Geneva context to continue to raise visibility of UNAIDS and put forward its value proposition. UNAIDS has developed a value proposition which was officially launched at the Structured Funding Dialogue in March 2024. This has resulted in further funding being secured and ongoing negotiations with member states. In the next six months, UNAIDS will continue the financing campaign, targeting country-level funding. Additionally, UNAIDS is signing a memorandum of

understanding (MoU) with the Global Fund and working closely with primary recipients to provide technical support.

40. Management takes note of the Committee's recommendation relating to **the Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP)** developed by WHO and fully agrees with the Committee that regular engagement with WHO is vital to ensure a successful roll out of the ERP. In addition to holding an observer role in project steering meetings, UNAIDS participates in biweekly project planning calls with WHO and other hosted entities. While UNAIDS's roll-out of the ERP depends on the WHO implementation schedule, management is closely following developments and has put in place an internal project management structure, with focal points for each of the technical areas, coordinated by an internal implementation project manager.
41. Management also welcomes the Committee's expert advice on **enterprise risk management** and will continue to enhance the risk framework and associated processes. As noted in the Committee's report, enhancing risk management culture is a continuous process. Management is taking steps to enhance the overall risk management maturity level of the organization and to continue to embed risk management in decision-making and operations.
42. Management is supportive of the Committee's advice to transition the **internal audit** function away from a focus on compliance towards a holistic risk-based approach, and to ensure that internal audit activities align with the main risks of the organization and with a greater emphasis on a risk-based approach to the selection of audit assignments. Management is engaging with WHO IOS to explore options to ensure adequate audit coverage while taking into account the size and nature of operations and the main risks of the organization.
43. **Ethics function.** Management will support all efforts of Ethics Office and IOS to develop mechanisms for collaboration under the framework of WHO policy on preventing and addressing retaliation, facilitating the involvement of the areas of the organization whose collaboration is necessary for full implementation.
44. **Human resources management.** Management welcomes the Committee's expert advice and expresses its commitment to continue the provision of policies, resources, trainings, coaching programmes and tools to enable staff to perform at their best to meet the challenges of the global HIV response. There is an ongoing and strong focus on upskilling and reskilling staff, which includes interventions to map and define skill profiles of core staff positions. Learning interventions in this biennium are being strengthened to advance leadership of the Joint Programme in countries and across all functions of the organization. Specific actions in this regard can be reviewed in the "Update on strategic human resources management issues".
45. **Secretariat realignment.** Management agrees that there are important and ongoing change management processes that will continue within the Secretariat, particularly relating to knowledge management practices and skills building linked to the practice areas and achievement of the goals of the Global AIDS Strategy. Management will continue to engage and track staff perceptions and views through the biannual global staff survey, among other measures, and use its risk management framework to ascertain and mitigate both top-down and bottom-up risks which staff face in performing their work.
46. **Information security.** Management appreciates the Committee's advice to preserve information security of the organization, which is also a priority for UNAIDS. In the past year, UNAIDS has managed security information and events. The external Security



Operations Center agency was engaged to manage detection and response of cybersecurity incidents, and, as result of the alignment process, a dedicated information technology (IT) security officer function and an internal IT security team were created. A strong and solid awareness programme has been carried out to prevent “phishing”, with additional sessions for departments that handle sensitive data. Mandatory online awareness training is now required for staff who failed the “phishing” exercises. The risk mitigation plan for 2024–2025 addresses measures to provide additional protection for sensitive data at the highest levels of the organization and to provide an extra layer of protection before opening attachments or links from external contacts.

### Implementation of the Joint Inspection Unit recommendations

47. Management welcomes the reports of the JIU and appreciates the reviews of cross-cutting issues that promote administrative efficiency and contribute to greater coordination between UN agencies.
48. Detailed information on the implementation of the JIU review of the administration and management of UNAIDS was provided in a separate update to the PCB (UNAIDS/PCB (47)/20.40; and UNAIDS/PCB (47)/CRP5).
49. In 2023, the JIU issued seven system-wide reviews and notes of interest to UNAIDS (Table 4).<sup>4</sup> Management welcomes the findings and recommendations of the JIU and will adopt a risk-based approach to prioritize actions as advised by the IEOAC.
50. In the period 2014–2023, the JIU issued 59 system-wide and several organizational reports, notes and letters, for a total of 412 recommendations, excluding the recommendations addressed to single organizations.
51. The JIU uses an online web-based tracking system to monitor and follow-up on the status of acceptance and implementation of their recommendations.
52. During 2023, the acceptance and implementation rates for UNAIDS reported in that tracking system stood at 87% and 71%,<sup>5</sup> respectively.
53. Management will continue to address JIU recommendations, while recognizing that some of the recommendations may not be fully relevant to a small and cosponsored programme such as UNAIDS. Therefore, a risk-based approach will be taken to prioritize actions with due consideration to the limited resources and smaller scale of the UNAIDS Secretariat, compared with other UN entities.

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<sup>4</sup> JIU reviews addressed to single organizations were excluded.

<sup>5</sup> Status of acceptance and implementation of recommendations from 2015–2022, as at 15 January, 2024 (A/78/34).

**Table 4 JIU reviews and notes issued in 2023**

<b>JIU review</b>	<b>Highlights and CEB comments</b>
<a href="#">JIU/REP/2023/2</a> . Review of the <b>internal pretribunal-stage appeal mechanisms</b> available to staff of the UN System organizations.	<a href="#">Review highlights</a>
<p>The main objectives of the review are to: (i) map the diversity of pretribunal appeal mechanisms available to staff of the UN System organizations; (ii) compare strengths and weaknesses of the prevailing models of formal internal appeal mechanisms across the system; (iii) highlight good practices and, where possible, opportunities for increased effectiveness and efficiency through adjustment of existing mechanisms and procedures.</p>	
<a href="#">JIU/REP/2023/3</a> . Review of <b>accountability frameworks</b> in the UN.	<a href="#">Review highlights</a> <a href="#">CEB comments</a>
<p>The main purpose of the present review is to identify areas for improvement in existing accountability frameworks and to contribute to strengthening accountability of the UN System as a whole, including its credibility, efficiency and effectiveness.</p>	
Review of <b>mental health and well-being policies</b> and practices in UN System organizations ( <a href="#">JIU/REP/2023/4</a> ).	<a href="#">Review highlights</a> <a href="#">CEB comments</a>
<p>The main objectives of the review are to: (i) analyze the strategies, policies and practices relevant to the mental health and well-being of personnel within participating organizations; (ii) evaluate the organizational structures and functions to ensure preventive and protective measures for mental health and well-being; (iii) Review the relevant system-wide mechanisms and interagency initiatives, and; (iv) highlight good practices and lessons learned in organizations.</p>	
<a href="#">JIU/REP/2023/6</a> . <b>Flexible working arrangements</b> in the UN	<a href="#">Review highlights</a>
<p>The objectives of the review are to provide an assessment and comparative analysis of current FWA policies and practices in use in the UN System organizations, with a view to exploring areas for further improvement, identifying good practices and lessons learned, and enhancing coherence system-wide. The purpose of the review is to inform the legislative organs, governing bodies and executive heads of JIU-participating organizations about the status, utilization and implementation of such policies and practices in the UN System.</p>	
<a href="#">JIU/REP/2023/8</a> . Review of <b>the use of non-staff personnel</b> and related contractual modalities in the UN System.	<a href="#">Review highlights</a>
<p>The objective of the review is to apprise the legislative and/or governing bodies and the executive heads of the JIU-participating organizations of the status of the policies and practices of using non-staff personnel and related contractual modalities in the UN System, with the aim of guiding ongoing and future workforce-related initiatives.</p>	
<a href="#">JIU/REP/2023/9</a> : Quality, effectiveness, efficiency and sustainability of <b>health insurance schemes</b> in the UN System organizations	<a href="#">Review highlights</a>
<p>The review provides a system-wide comparative assessment of the 26 health insurance schemes for active and retired staff members and families of the participating organizations. It focuses on the coverage, quality, effectiveness, efficiency and financial sustainability of the plans, including the funding modalities and long-term implications of after-service health insurance benefits, with a view to identifying good practices and potential areas for improvement and standardization.</p>	



## Conclusion

54. Management is pleased with the unqualified audit opinion from the External Auditor on the 2023 financial statements and welcomes the recommendations that support the strengthening of internal controls, the effective use of resources and the quality of reporting.
55. Management reiterates its commitment to continue improving the timely implementation of audit recommendations and will continue to introduce measures in this regard.

## Proposed decision points

56. The Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:
- *Take note* of the report of the work of the Office of Internal Oversight Services for 2023;
  - *Accept* the External Auditor report for the financial year ended 31 December 2023;
  - *Take note* of the report of the Ethics Office;
  - *Welcome* the report of the UNAIDS Independent External Oversight Advisory Committee and *look forward* to the next report in 2025; and
  - *Take note* of management's response to the organizational oversight reports.

*[End of document]*