

UNAIDS PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD WORKING GROUP

THEMATIC SEGMENT:

Addressing inequalities in children and adolescents to end AIDS by 2030

MEETING SUMMARY: FIRST MEETING OF THE WORKING GROUP

DATE: Thursday 26 September 2024

MEETING AGENDA

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

SUMMARY

1. Welcome and introduction

Mr. Morten Ussing, Director of Governance, UNAIDS Secretariat, welcomed the PCB working group to its first meeting for the preparation of the thematic segment of the 55th PCB (12 December 2024) on *Addressing inequalities in children and adolescents to end AIDS by 2030*.

Mr. Ussing recalled the agenda for the meeting and thanked the participants who had joined the working group. He said that the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) and PCB thematic segment would take place in Nairobi, as decided by the Board at the invitation of the PCB Chair, Kenya. Mr. Ussing said that the PCB working group was a longstanding tradition for preparing the PCB thematic segments. The membership of the working group is composed of the three constituencies of the Board, Member States, the NGO delegation and the Cosponsors, and different regions are represented to speak to the different angles that each theme has in different country contexts.

The Secretariat recalled that the working group was open to PCB members, with a practice of exceptionally opening a seat for partners of the Joint Programme within the governance set up and depending on the theme. For this topic, there were two additional invitees including the Global Fund as a key partner in the AIDS response, and the Global Alliance to end AIDS in children, as a key partner of multisectoral stakeholders working on the topic.

Mr. Ussing stressed that the thematic segment is one full day of the PCB agenda and allows for an in-depth discussion on a specific programmatic area within the AIDS response, with no decisions taken. The decisions would be taken at the following PCB meeting, where a summary follow-up report is presented to the Board. It is enshrined in the PCB Modus Operandi to have a decision-making segment and a thematic segment at each PCB meeting.

The Secretariat recalled the process for selecting the theme. The PCB Bureau sends out a call for themes to the PCB members and participants and the proposals for themes are reviewed by the PCB Bureau based on a set of criteria approved by the PCB. The Bureau then puts forward its proposals for the themes for the thematic segments of the following year for PCB consideration and endorsement by the Board. This theme originally came from the NGO delegation and was widely supported by the Bureau and approved by the Board.

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

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

Paula Munderi, Team Lead, Programme Innovation for Prevention Treatment & Pediatrics at the UNAIDS Secretariat introduced the outline of the background note. She said that the background note would focus on inequalities in children and adolescents in achieving HIV targets. She emphasized that HIV treatment-related targets had not been reached, and that HIV prevention was also lagging.

The thematic segment would address the following:

1. Celebrate the progress achieved thus far, but acknowledge that the progress is not rapid enough to end of AIDS and children and adolescents by 2030.
2. Reflect on how to up the speed on progress towards the globally set HIV targets, bearing in mind that nearly all the evidence-based interventions were available.
3. And finally, what are the disparities? What are the inequalities? What are the barriers to progress and how to address these?

Ms Munderi proposed to have definitions on the age bands for newborns, infants, children, adolescents, young adolescents, older adolescents, that are used in data reporting in the introduction. She referred to the Status Update on pediatric AIDS which had been launched at the Munich AIDS Conference earlier this year.

Following the introduction, the background note would analyze, through an inequalities lens, barriers to providing services to prevent HIV vertical transmission, and test and treat children and adolescents. Ms Munderi emphasized that the background note would underline the inequalities that affect women and girls, boys and young men, orphans and vulnerable children, caregivers, key population groups, and pregnant and breastfeeding women, especially those who are marginalized.

In the next section of the background note, Ms Munderi said that the focus would be on notable good practices regarding leadership and resources. The last chapter would focus on the way forward and would involve calls to actions, as one of the objectives of the thematic segment on the topic is to create momentum and commitment from the participants.

Mr Ussing added that the day preceding the PCB meeting, there would be field visits organized in Kenya, one of which is focused on children and adolescents and where some of the challenges mentioned by Ms Munderi would be highlighted. Board members would be able to see directly some of the work on children and adolescents in the HIV response.

3. Discussion on the Outline

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

Member States

- Expressed appreciation for the draft outline.
- Enquired as to the role of the background note versus the agenda of the thematic segment day.

PCB NGO Delegation

- Noted the good work done thus far on the draft outline.
- Stressed that the financing and resources aspect would be important to develop.
- Highlighted that the Civil Society Advisory Group would also comment on the paper later.
- Emphasized that there existed data challenges, for instance during climate crises.
- Mentioned a global study on the financing gaps for HIV in children and adolescents in low- and middle-income countries, published on World AIDS Day, with a suggestion to share it with the working group to integrate into background note.

Cosponsors

- Expressed appreciation for the work done on the outline.
- Noted that it was the second time the theme of children and adolescents in the HIV response was the topic of a thematic segment and suggested using the paper as background reading. Given that we have the solutions to most of the issues discussed, the background note should be an “advocacy pitch” with precise and clear recommendations for all partners to rally behind.
- Recommended that HIV should not be treated in isolation for this topic, highlighting that integration was key.
- Emphasized that structural barriers should be highlighted, including, to name a few, child marriage, knowledge and practices in rural areas, human rights and women’s bodily autonomy, and ensure to underline to how this links with broader health and rights.

Global Alliance

- Highlighted the need to explain how to accelerate the progress on children and adolescents and clearly state the game changers and how to prioritize actions at the country-level.
- Appreciated the use of the inequalities lens, especially around the treatment cascade, and emphasized the lack of access to treatment and viral load suppression, but also data as a barrier to better understand inequalities.

- Stressed the need to highlight all affected groups including young mothers and women from key populations.
- Noted with appreciation that global leadership was part of the outline and agenda, and said that was very important to have more champions on child health.

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

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

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

Ms Munderi presented the zero-draft agenda of the thematic segment. She emphasised that the thematic segment would provide an opportunity for the PCB to discuss discuss inequities and poor outcomes that are barriers to progress towards ending AIDS in children and adolescents by 2030. In particular, the thematic segment would:

1. Present an overview of progress towards global targets, and persistent gaps and challenges in the response to AIDS in children and adolescents
2. Identify strategies and innovations to accelerate HIV prevention, treatment, protection, care and support for pregnant women, children and adolescents
3. Showcase notable programme successes and factors that led to those
4. Provide an update on the work of the Global Alliance to end AIDS in children by 2030, and
5. Suggest priority actions for the near future

Ms Munderi suggested that the thematic segment consist of 3 panels with an opening and closing session. The opening session will consist of the introduction of the moderator and three keynote addresses to provide the big picture strategic vision regarding the session's objectives. The keynote addresses will be given by the Executive Director of UNAIDS, a Minister-level Member State representative and a civil society representative. These will be followed by a session which will provide the main highlights and key issues from the thematic segment background note possibly presented by a member of the Joint Programme, as well as another part focused on the data. Two presentations would be included in this part.

Ms Munderi then described the round table discussions. The first would focus on the remaining barriers to eliminating vertical transmission, the second on the remaining barriers to testing, care & support of children and adolescents, and the final round table would highlight partnerships for action, policies, health systems and resources. The closing session would summarize and conclude the discussions, as well as highlight key recommendations.

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

5. Discussion on the zero-draft agenda

Cosponsors

- Suggested to focus on successful approaches to prevention in general, including tools like condoms, PrEP, counselling and guidance, and partner testing, to understand how to improve prevention literacy and how these tools can be used more optimally.
- Proposed to show how the work on children and adolescents in the context of HIV would work to strengthen health systems more generally and vice versa.
- Stressed that important models for community engagement existed that need to be highlighted.

Global Fund

- Highlighted the importance of sustainability and integration moving forward for pediatric care, and suggested to add a point on sustainable health systems.

The Secretariat thanked the participants and suggested that the comments could be made in writing, together with suggestions for panelists. Ms Munderi said that the Secretariat would propose a revised agenda for the second meeting.

6. Next steps

Mr. Ussing thanked the working group members for their comments and encouraged them to send written inputs by Thursday 3 October 2024 as well as any relevant documents to support the drafting of the background note.

The Secretariat reiterated that the call for submission of good practices would be sent out to the PCB members and all permanent missions and expressed hope that working group members would submit good practice illustrations and disseminate the call further to partners. These will contribute to setting the agenda for the thematic segment, compiled in a conference room paper and used for other UNAIDS reports. Mr. Ussing said that all working group members were welcome to disseminate this call to partners. He added that the working group members were welcome to share speaker ideas. It will be important to have choices of speakers to have better regional and gender balancing throughout the agenda.

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

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