

Press release

Governing board tasks UNAIDS with making the money work

Board calls for greater accountability and coherence, urges the UN to deliver as one and stresses importance of country-led responses to the AIDS epidemic

Geneva, 27 June 2007 – The governing board of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) has instructed UNAIDS to play a leading role in international efforts to translate AIDS funding into action.

Outcomes from the 20th meeting of UNAIDS' governing board included key decisions on moving the AIDS response forward. Issues such as UN reform, universal access, involvement of civil society, gender and AIDS, UNAIDS governance reform and the 2008-2009 Unified Budget and Workplan were high on the agenda.

The Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) is the governing body of UNAIDS. This year Thailand took over from Sweden as the new chair of the PCB and the board appointed the United States to act as vice chair, and Senegal as rapporteur. This year's meeting was attended by more than 300 participants and observers from member states, international organisations, civil society and non-governmental organisations.

The board took measures to strengthen UNAIDS as a global forum for policy debate, and instructed UNAIDS to collaborate with key partners to develop an Independent Review Mechanism to validate national AIDS plans as eligible for international funding. As low- and middle-income countries access international funding, the board also called on UNAIDS to act as a clearing house for the provision of technical support.

The board endorsed efforts by UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria to strengthen their working relationship, calling it 'a new era of working together'. The board's decisions were in line with UNAIDS ongoing efforts to coordinate efforts to translate international AIDS funding into action—or "make the money work".

Executive Director of UNAIDS Dr Peter Piot presented his report on the first day of the meeting and stressed, "This is not the time for new initiatives but for consolidation. It is time to concentrate on results and on accountability." He added, "Some sceptics dispute the UN's capacity to deliver as one. AIDS, however, proves that we can do it. I want to highlight the momentum that is gathering around coherence and implementation."

UNAIDS was cited as a 'pathfinder' for UN reform, and it was recommended that current coherence efforts be informed by the UNAIDS experience.

UNAIDS was one of the first United Nations programmes with non-governmental organisation participation in its governing body. This year a review of civil society participation in the PCB was presented to board members. The board welcomed the review and recognised the need to provide stronger support to the NGO delegation. To reinforce the participation of the NGO delegation and wider civil society in the PCB, board members endorsed the creation of a Communication and Consultation Facility to enhance communication between NGO Delegates and their constituencies and strengthen civil society involvement in the PCB.

The PCB strongly emphasized the need to address gender-based vulnerabilities of both women and men to HIV. It urged governments, donors and UNAIDS to significantly expand efforts to address equalities and inequities between women and men, and gender-based violence.

The board approved the Unified Budget and Workplan of UNAIDS for 2008-2009, and urged all countries to fully fund the plan. The distribution of the budget was as follows; US\$ 135 million for the 10 Cosponsors of UNAIDS; US\$ 182 million for the UNAIDS Secretariat; US\$ 147 million for interagency activities with a US\$ 5 million contingency.

During the meeting UNAIDS also launched its inaugural Annual Report. The 70-page document gives information on UNAIDS' key activities and achievements in 2006. The report also includes financial information and progress made in UNAIDS' cross-cutting functions.

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UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS' Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at www.unaids.org