

# Outline of the report of the Executive Director

## Introduction

- Excellencies, Welcome to the 48th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board meeting.
- In this report I would like to update you on progress made in the priority areas I committed to focus on at my first PCB in December 2019, just a month after my appointment as Executive Director. This is my fourth PCB, and we are into the second year of the covid-19 pandemic. The world has changed more than we could ever have imagined.

## Leveraging a new momentum: the Global AIDS strategy 2021-2026 and the UNGA

### Political Declaration: Ending Inequalities and Getting on Track to End AIDS by 2030

- The Strategy is a bold call to action to tackle the acute and intersecting inequalities that are obstructing progress. It puts communities at the forefront and maps out the changes- across laws, policies, social norms and services- that are required to get us back on track to reach the end of AIDS as a public health threat by 2030.
- The United Nations General Assembly High-level meeting on AIDS, earlier this month, has further leveraged the momentum for change. And our resolve has been strengthened with the adoption of the Political Declaration and its new and ambitious targets for 2025.
- Thank you all for your engagement and tireless efforts in making sure that the HLM was a success. My sincere thanks to the two co-facilitators, Australia and Namibia. In New York, here in Geneva and their capitals, they were instrumental in securing the strong outcome at the High-Level Meeting.
- Now is the time to operationalize the commitments into practice. What does that look like?
- The new strategy and political declaration ask us to refocus our work on closing those gaps—focusing our energy on the relative progress instead of on averages will drive a different kind of data-driven AIDS response.
- Bold new 95% targets across the AIDS response and across populations will not be achievable by doing more of the same. We have to rapidly work to reinvent AIDS services in ways that close inequalities.
- Let's work together to measure progress on inequalities—improving our data and actionable understanding of the complex shape of the pandemic in 2021 to target our scarce resources.
- Let's align laws and policies with science— removing punitive and discriminatory laws, policies and practices that block effective responses to HIV.

- Upholding human rights is critical to building a policy environment that speeds cutting edge HIV technologies to the people who need them most.
- And we will need more funding, not less, to fighting AIDS and other pandemics.
- And we must harness concretely what we have learned in AIDS, the structures we have built and those we still must build, to help improve global capacity to respond to pandemics. This includes building rights-based efforts, pandemic-resilient communities able to mobilize response from the grassroots upward, and data to guide responses to where a virus actually is.
- We can do these things. And, if we do, we can get back on track to ending AIDS by 2030. But let us not pretend it will easy. Let us not pretend we can achieve it without redoubling political, technical, and scientific efforts.
- I ask you to support your national leadership and planning bodies to fully incorporate the new strategy and 2025 country-level targets into national plans and domestic resourcing.
- This work is urgent and necessary. Gaps are widening within and between countries. Already fragile systems for health are collapsing from the pressures of responding to COVID-19.

### **Supporting national responses to deliver across programme priorities**

- Disruptions in service delivery, exacerbated by lockdowns and the stifling of civil society's ability to operate along with an overreliance on criminal laws, are all hallmarks of the ravaging impact of the colliding epidemics of HIV and COVID-19.
- UNAIDS responded rapidly last year, working closely with governments, cosponsors, communities, the Global Fund, PEPFAR and other implementing partners, drawing on reprogrammed funds.
- Today, around 70 UNAIDS country offices have been engaged in rapid responses to COVID-19 and HIV and have supported COVID -19 response plans.
- The generous financial help from the German Ministry of Health has proven vital in these difficult times of third Covid-19 waves across low-income and middle- income countries.
- At the continental level – we are working closely with the Africa CDC to support them with their vaccine roll out strategy – especially with regards to community risk communication and community demand creation – through supporting an app for collecting rumours and misinformation related to the Covid-19 vaccine across the continent and in turn providing capacities for analysis and tailored communications through community-based information platforms. In addition, under the leadership of

the Africa CDC, we are working with a number of countries including – Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Namibia, Cote D'Ivoire, Ghana, Madagascar, Algeria, Burundi, Malawi – to develop and implement community based information and vaccine demand programmes alongside acceleration of testing and contact tracing especially among populations in informal settings of slums.

- Our efforts to ensure that no one is being left behind are being strengthened with more granular data. I am excited to announce that we are now producing sub-national estimates.
- Another important and new workstream is the community-led monitoring that we have embarked upon, together with PEPFAR and other partners. A key lesson emerging is that when communities are adequately supported and entrusted, they can generate information and insights that help bridge persistent gaps in HIV programmes.
- We are responding to a range of pressing human rights concerns unleashed by COVID-19 and lockdowns. Ongoing activities range from supporting LGBTI communities who are displaced to monitoring the implementation of human rights decrees and guidance in the COVID-response affecting people living with, and affected by, HIV.
- Our commitment to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination is stronger than ever. We are working hard to support countries in removing punitive and discriminatory laws, policies and practices that block effective responses to HIV—such as laws that criminalize any aspect of sex work, sexual orientation and gender identity, drug use and possession for personal use, consensual same-sex sexual relations, HIV exposure, non-disclosure or transmission, and those that impose HIV-related travel restrictions and mandatory testing.
- Laws determine whether the society strives for ensuring inclusion or exclusion; for access to justice or lack thereof; for accountability or impunity. Law reform takes time but it is essential. We are currently involved in a range of efforts, from supporting the reform of specific legislation on HIV, such as our ongoing work in Benin, to challenging involuntary sterilisation of women living with HIV and HIV transmission in Kenya.
- Our new strategy has re-energized a number of multi-sectoral commitments across sectors. We are strengthening our work on HIV Prevention which is especially sensitive to interventions across social protection, education, employment, food security and nutrition as well as violence prevention and gender equality. This work

is ever more urgent given the deepening of already high poverty rates in many countries and entrenched gender disparities.

- Education is a critical entry point to address HIV infections among girls. 6 in 7 new HIV infections among adolescents (15 to 19) in sub-Saharan Africa are among girls.
- School closures due to COVID-19 have exacerbated domestic violence, sexual exploitation, early marriage, and female genital mutilation (FGM), contributing towards psychological and health problems and gender discrimination.
- Co-led by the principals of UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women; The 'Education *Plus*' initiative is a high-profile, high-level political advocacy drive, underpinned by a powerful rights-based campaign, for the policies, actions and upscaled investments to effectively prevent HIV and address other inter-related threats to adolescent girls' education, health and well-being.
- We will be launching the initiative on July 1 as a joint UN commitment to the Generation Equality Forum in Paris. Countries committing include Lesotho, Gabon, Cameroon (held an official national launch recently)- which are joining the first champion country announcement of Sierra Leone this past March.
- We must learn from the AIDS response- 9 million lives were needlessly lost because life-saving treatments remained out of reach for people in poverty and in the Global South. At the core of our response to both pandemics is the principle that health is a human right, not a privilege.
- I am proud that UNAIDS is the co-founder and co-leader of the "People's Vaccine Alliance", which calls for COVID-19 vaccines to be a global public good and available to everyone everywhere.
- Our call is supported by over 200 sitting and former heads of state, Nobel Laureates and faith leaders, including the Presidents of Afghanistan, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and South Africa; the Prime Minister of Pakistan; former Prime Minister Gordon Brown, the Dalai Lama, Malala as well as UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.
- With still only 0.3% of COVID-19 vaccine doses having been administered in low-income countries, the People's Vaccine alliance advocates for three urgent actions to maximise global vaccine manufacturing: a) sharing technology and know-how via the WHO COVID-19 Technology Access Pool (C-TAP); b) waiving intellectual property rules related to COVID-19 products at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and c) investing in enhancing manufacturing capacity in developing countries, including in Africa.

## Building a safe, equal and empowering workplace for everyone – transforming our culture, strengthening our systems

### Mitigating COVID19 impact on staff well-being

- Our staff, like the communities they live in, have also been affected by the COVID19 Pandemic. We have had many colleagues and families test positive for COVID-19. I am grateful that many have recuperated and were able to return to work and family life.
- I have urged all managers to continue to prioritize staff well-being, including by managing workloads, setting realistic deadlines, supporting work–life balance by encouraging time off work and remaining flexible and open-minded around working arrangements.

### Improving virtual working

- Our staff have demonstrated great agility and continue to adjust to various working arrangements (e.g. shifting from teleworking to hybrid arrangement and for some a full return to office). We have set minimum standards for all our offices to ensure safe workplaces to minimize occupational exposure to COVID19.
- Staff across all our regions spent most of the past year working remotely from home and working hard to support HIV and COVID19 responses and engage with communities and national partners. Through the surveys staff have welcomed the flexibility of teleworking while. On the other hand, others highlight the risk of ‘blurred’ demarcation leading to an imbalance in work-life harmony. We continually encourage staff to disengage, and for teams to respect working hours and time zones.
- We continue to ensure staff have all the necessary tools to deliver their work regardless of location.
- We listened to staff and where necessary are providing nationally recruited staff with some reimbursement for additional costs associated with teleworking e.g. telephone and internet data costs.

### UN vaccine programme roll out status

- UNAIDS is participating in the UN Systemwide Vaccination programme that is expanding access to COVID19 vaccines for UN staff and dependants in 152 duty stations. Unfortunately, the programme is also affected by the vaccine inequity that we see globally.

- Since the programme was launched in May 2021, up to 271,000 vaccine doses have been delivered in 67 countries. Up to 97,000 doses have been administered to UN staff and dependents in 42 countries (109 UNAIDS staff have received the first shot through the UN programme). UNAIDS staff are also increasingly benefiting from national vaccination programmes where they exist.

#### MAP implementation

- Through the implementation of the *Management Action Plan for a healthy, equitable and enabling workplace for all UNAIDS staff*, and related efforts and initiatives, the Secretariat is in a much different place today in terms of our internal capacity, systems and policies to prevent and address harassment, discrimination and abuse of power. But, as the Global Staff Survey data show, deep transformation is very hard work and doesn't happen overnight. We are progressing on our journey, however, and I am encouraged.
- We have invested in dedicated, internal leadership and capacity in some key areas.

#### Ending impunity

- An important dimension of the culture transformation process is ensuring that we uphold the highest standards of integrity and accountability. I am pleased to report multiple, positive trends in relation to compliance and audits. Importantly, WHO Internal Oversight Services highlighted improvements in the number of controls with high level of residual risks, and the overall effectiveness of internal controls.
- Transparency supports a culture of accountability. HRM publishes – to all staff, and to you, the PCB – annual reports on disciplinary and other corrective measures, and an Administrative Review statistical overview. This year we are presenting our first management response to independent organizational accountability reports. I wish to note the considerable overall decrease in reports of concern to, and subsequent investigations by, IOS.
- In relation to the external audit, following the review of operations in Headquarters and the UNAIDS Country Office in Myanmar, the external auditor issued an unmodified opinion on the UNAIDS Financial Statements, and issued audit recommendations related to performance and data reporting, award monitoring, and supporting our continued efforts in relation to the Management Action Plan, ethics, and overall promoting an enabling working environment.
- With regards to the ethics function, its independence is being strengthened, with adjusted reporting lines and newly introduced term limits, aligning with best practices

as set out in recommendations of the UN Joint Inspection Unit. Recruitment of a Senior Ethics Officer is currently underway.

*Improving the internal justice system, establishing a Service Level Agreement with WHO Internal Oversight Services*

- I am pleased that UNAIDS could make significant inputs to WHO's strengthened policy prohibiting harassment, sexual harassment, discrimination and abuse of authority. We launched the new policy with all-staff webinars, working in partnership across offices that are supporting the implementation of the policy.
- We are about to sign a revised Memorandum of Understanding with WHO Internal Oversight Services, incorporating service levels and time targets for the investigative process.

*Culture transformation*

- The culture transformation initiative is well under way to ensure that UNAIDS is a safe, equal and empowering workplace for all.
- The Global Staff Survey results highlights some areas for celebration and also some areas of concern.
- Follow up from the Global Staff Survey is a key aspect for senior management at the individual, teams and institutional levels. Building on the commitments made by senior leaders to champion culture transformation at the end of last year, the GSS provides an additional impetus for senior leaders to role model inclusive and transformative leadership for a safe, equal and empowering UNAIDS.
- Follow up to the Global Staff Survey focuses on 3 priority action areas: 1) Harassment and abuse of authority through the implementation and socialization of the new policy, enhanced legal capacity in HRM, stronger compliance mechanisms, agreeing and implementing the IOS SLA; 2) transparency and effectiveness of the SLT through 360 appraisals, PALM assignments to respond to the GSS feedback and tracking implementation, personal commitments of SLT; 3) Addressing Exclusion through Value charters, healing, anti-racism and actions in Change Hubs.
- The Culture Transformation team is supporting teams to bridge the process from unpacking the GSS findings and developing action plans to the development of Team Values Charters which guide conduct and ways of working within teams.
- As part of UNAIDS' policy review, a revised and strengthened policy, Preventing and Addressing Abusive Conduct, was launched in March. A campaign is being

organized to provide an additional platform for staff engagement and action to ensure workplace wellness and further reduce cases of abuse and misconduct in UNAIDS. The roll-out plan includes continued dialogue, training and action to create a movement for prevention and early action to redress abusive conduct in our workplace.

- Following organization-wide conversations on racism, an action plan was developed, “ Listen deeply – Unite widely – Act boldly” The Action Plan, endorsed by Cabinet, urges everyone to acknowledge, step up and act decisively to end systemic racism inherent in structures, policies and practices and guide what behaviours are expected and what is unacceptable.

### Alignment of UNAIDS to deliver the Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026

- Work on the alignment stream commenced in early 2021, initiated as a thorough review of the way in which UNAIDS is organized to deliver its mandate, and encompassing both structural and non-structural change elements. The alignment stream set out to achieve the following five objectives through a transparent, consultative process grounded in UNAIDS’ values and keeping staff members at the centre:
  - (i) UNAIDS is aligned with the AIDS Strategy and achieving its highest impact;
  - (ii) UNAIDS is financially sustainable and more cost effective;
  - (iii) UNAIDS is diverse and inclusive and therefore legitimate and credible;
  - (iv) UNAIDS is a knowledge driven Secretariat that optimizes its world-wide expertise and staff through the use of digital technologies in its work; and
  - (v) UNAIDS is aligned with the UN Reform, principally within its work on pandemic preparedness.
- The process has five phases. We have completed the conception phase that examined our conditions for success; the exploration phase which collected data to determine our status quo; and the envisioning phase that examined what is possible. We are now in the formulating phase that is charting the way forward and which will lead into the performance phase to roll out the new organizational structure.
- We are ensuring a transparent, inclusive and consultative process. We have ensured strong engagement in this process from staff, including listening sessions, a survey on the alignment and focus group discussions. We hold regular townhall meetings and provide updates to share timely information on the alignment with all staff.

- We will ensure that you as board members are kept informed and consulted of progress on the alignment at PCB meetings and through the Bureau in between sessions. We will also communicate to the CCO, and to our other partners.
- We are running this process on a short timeline to ensure minimal disruption to UNAIDS' activities and our support to countries. We expect the new overall functional structure to be fleshed out into a detailed organigram in the coming weeks with implementation of the new structure to be completed by the end of 2021.

### **Preparing a new UBRAF: results, resources and accountability**

- At our Special Session in March, we presented an update on the new UBRAF development for your initial guidance. Building on this and as agreed with the PCB just two months ago, we are pleased to present a Zero Draft UBRAF, a truly collective product of the Joint Programme. We started its development in January through a jointly owned and led intensive effort led by an effective Joint Programme Steering Group. We looked at past recommendations, reflected on lessons learned with past and current UBRAF and benefited from external expertise. The PCB Bureau was updated regularly and the UBRAF Working group already had a first productive meeting last week.
- Building on your support and guidance, the new UBRAF includes strategic shifts – both programmatic and organization ones - to best harness the unique potential of the Joint Programme. The Zero Draft includes the general direction for our joint work for 2022-2026 and all elements of our high-level 5-year UBRAF framework including the Joint Programme vision, theory of change, result framework with clear prioritization and emphasis on addressing structural drivers, how we will optimize and leverage the Joint Programme's capacities and collaboration with other actors, indicative resources allocation and accountability, monitoring and reporting system.
- It is work in progress. We are working to ensure tighter programming for results and be better jointly accountable for them. We are looking at further innovative approaches, exploring new ways of working across the Joint Programme, to become even more effective and more integrated within the broader UN including UN reform. We are engaging intensively with all cosponsors, assessing our capacities on the ground and identifying partnerships that are needed to make the most difference.
- The feedback from the pre-PCB has been extremely valuable and we look forward to further comments from the PCB to improve and develop our full 5-year UBRAF and first biennial workplan and budget for submission to the PCB Special Session in October and the UBRAF indicators for the December PCB.

- I wish to sincerely appreciate the nomination of experts for the UBRAF Working Group and will intensify its work in the coming weeks.
- We commit to and count on your support for an effective and fully funded UBRAF so that we can deliver the very best of the Joint Programme to further save and improve lives and leave no one behind.

### Increasing and optimizing use of resources for the Joint Programme

- As of today, a total amount of US\$ 86.4 million has been made available for year 2021 of the 2020-2021 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework representing 46.2% of the annual core budget of US\$ 187 million. This compares well to the amount made available for the same period in 2020 and is higher than the amount made available during similar periods in previous years. We are very grateful for this level of support and see it as measure of confidence of the PCB in our direction of travel and our impact in countries and globally.
- Based on the latest projections it is estimated that US\$166 million will be raised in 2021. Therefore, additional efforts are needed to achieve the resource mobilization target for 2021.
- We recognize the challenging situation facing many governments and I want to extend my sincere thanks to all our donors for continuous support and for timely disbursements. You have allowed the Joint Programme to respond to the pressing needs on the ground and to save lives.
- We regret a big funding cut from a key and long-standing donor. We look forward to reviewing and addressing this, especially as we were assured this did not signify deprioritisation of the AIDS response, nor did it signify a diminished commitment to the Joint Programme.
- With the new ambitious targets of the Political Declaration, we look forward to engaging with all of you in a funding dialogue later this year to explore how to step up and invite others to step in.
- I urge you to push hard to ensure that the strategy is fully resourced. We have seen what happens when a strategy is not fully resourced—we do not achieve the targets. We have seen that where resourcing is closer to the defined resource needs, countries make much greater progress towards targets.

### Conclusion

- Let me close by assuring you on behalf of my senior team and the entire Joint Programme of our determination to take forward the momentum you have generated

by adopting an ambitious Global AIDS strategy and supporting an equally ambitious Political Declaration. The strategy is our roadmap ahead.

- Profound change often occurs in the context of crisis. Let us seize this unique opportunity to leverage the deep reforms needed to end inequalities and end AIDS.

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