

STATEMENT OF THE NGO DELEGATION ON OUTCOMES OF THE 43RD PCB ON PREVENTION OF AND RESPONSE TO HARASSMENT, INCLUDING SEXUAL HARASSMENT; BULLYING AND ABUSE OF POWER AT UNAIDS SECRETARIAT

Taking note of the Independent Expert Panel (IEP) report as well as the management response, and the statement by the representative of the UNAIDS Staff Association on the report, the PCB NGO delegation makes the following points:

1. Both the IEP report and the Statement of the Staff Association raised extremely serious issues, some of which have been raised as far back as 2011. These issues now require swift, urgent and robust action by the PCB and management of UNAIDS. This can be no time for rhetoric without actions, or piecemeal rather than substantial and sustained organisational change.
2. How UNAIDS responds and is seen to respond on this matter over the next few months will partly determine the future of the HIV response. Harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and abuse of power underpin other key drivers of the epidemic, and cannot be condoned. We are united in our rejection of these behaviours and of any organisational culture that allows them to exist. Without effectively and truly addressing these issues UNAIDS will lose its credibility to lead the HIV response.
3. The management response to the IEP Report addresses only some of these serious issues but conspicuously fails to address all recommendations of the IEP Report. In addition, we agree with many others that the current situation also reflects failures in governance and oversight on the part of the PCB that must be addressed and fixed as part of our 2019 working agenda.
4. Together with other members of the PCB, we recognize with regret the profound negative impact of harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and abuse of power on the staff of the UNAIDS Secretariat and their ability to deliver on the critical mandate of the Joint Programme and we stand in solidarity and support with the UNAIDS staff.
5. The findings of the IEP Report require immediate action on:
 - A renewed leadership in the Secretariat committed to addressing all issues in the IEP
 - New approaches towards strengthening both oversight and monitoring and evaluation of all levels of the Secretariat by the PCB
 - A robust, open and timely response to matters raised at any point by the Staff Association
 - A renewed culture of respect, inclusion, & transparency in UNAIDS that brings international standards of transparency and fairness within UNAIDS to the highest achievable level
 - Effective mechanisms for addressing harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying, and abuse of power at UNAIDS
6. On the way forward, we note:
 - The Executive Director's publicly stated commitment to leave in 6 months time and have a smooth transition time.
 - That the 43rd PCB called for the immediate initiation of the selection process for the next UNAIDS Executive Director;
 - The 43rd PCB's decision to establish a working group to oversee the required changes and the call for an extraordinary meeting of the PCB in March 2019 to review management steps taken and a strengthened plan for change.

Finally, we commit to constructive and accountable actions in support of the proposed changes for the next six months and beyond to return UNAIDS to its credible leading role in the global AIDS response. We will work with our constituencies, with the PCB, with management, and with UNAIDS staff to support these changes. People around the world living with and/or affected by HIV and AIDS deserve no less than an independent and strong UNAIDS which inspires positive change and leads by example.

We call on the UN Secretary General to continue taking all the necessary measures to continue being a champion for gender equality and in ensuring that all UN employees enjoy a safe and enabling working environment.

Jonathan Gunthorp, NGO Africa
Lucy Wanjiku Njenga, NGO Africa

Jules Kim, NGO Asia-Pacific
Aditia Taslim Lim, NGO Asia-Pacific

Alessandra Nilo, NGO Latin America
Devanand Milton, NGO Latin America

Valeriia Rachynska, NGO Europe
Alexander Pastoors, NGO Europe

Wangari Tharao, NGO North America
Andrew Spieldenner, NGO North America