

# *The UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation* *Communiqué*

December 2009

## **What happened at the 25th meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) in Geneva, Switzerland, December 8-10, 2009?**

During the 25th PCB Meeting, the [UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation](#), supported by observers from broader civil society, discussed an agenda that focused on the Second Independent Evaluation (SIE) of UNAIDS. Besides reviewing the evaluation, the agenda included a [report from the Executive Director](#), which covered an update on the [Operational plan for UNAIDS Action Framework: Addressing Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV](#), promoted the rights of men who have sex with men and transgender persons and discussed a renewed focus on prevention for UNAIDS. The board also discussed a report on the [impacts of the global financial and economic crisis on the AIDS response](#).

Below is an overview of the main outcomes of the meeting. Because the main meeting agenda item was the Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS, there was no thematic session at this board meeting. The full list of agenda items, decision points and recommendations can be found on the website of the PCB NGO Delegation and at UNAIDS [here](#).

***Thank you*** to civil society observers, who support the Delegation and provide valuable input.

### **[Report from the Executive Director of UNAIDS](#)**

On the first day of the meeting, Michel Sidibe, Executive Director (ED) of UNAIDS, gave his report on activities implemented and his vision for the following year. He noted that vulnerable groups need more resources as well as the need to focus on the social norms that enhance vulnerability to HIV. He reaffirmed his commitment to equality and human rights as part of prevention tailored to local epidemics, and to the systematic promotion of sexual and reproductive health rights. In his report, he touched on three key issues that the board then developed into decision points for follow up action.

### **[Operational plan for UNAIDS Action Framework: Addressing Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV](#)**

The operation plan for women and girls is the result of the work of the Global Task Force on Women and Girls, Gender Equality and HIV. This global task team was formed after a civil society-initiated decision in the 24<sup>th</sup> PCB meeting in June 2009, in which civil society and many supporters asked the board to mandate the Executive Director to lead in developing a task force and implementation plan for UNAIDS' work on women and girls, gender equality and HIV.

The operational plan is strong and was welcomed with praise by the board. The next step is implementation. The board supported the continued leadership of the Executive Director and asked for the plan to be implemented immediately and progress to be reported back to the board next December, at the 27<sup>th</sup> PCB meeting. The plan needs to take effect at country level; therefore, we need

YOU to make sure that is happening. Your UNAIDS Country Coordinator or UNAIDS partnership officer should know about this work and how it is being rolled out in country.

Please let UNAIDS know how important this work is, and ask how you can be involved as it rolls out in your country. We need to ensure that the plan moves to action!

### Human rights, men who have sex with men and transgender persons

In light of recent political displays of discrimination against men who have sex with men in national legislation, the board passed a decision point supporting the inclusion of men who have sex with men and transgender persons in UNAIDS' priorities and the expansion of programs to reduce HIV transmission among MSM and transgender. The difficult conversation around human rights and MSM and transgender reminds us of just how much more work we have to do as a global community in respecting human rights. Some countries stood in opposition to promoting the human rights of MSM while others wanted to broaden the decision point to promote the rights of sex workers and people who use drugs. Because no consensus was reached, the decision point will be revisited in the June 2010 PCB meeting.

### Prevention focus

In line with the findings of the UNAIDS Evaluation, the Executive Director talked about the need to focus on HIV prevention. The board supported this attention to HIV prevention and passed a decision point calling on UNAIDS to include HIV prevention as a priority in its new Mission Statement and new Strategic Plan. The ED mentioned his intention to establish a high level commission on HIV prevention to look at cost-effective prevention. The board's decision point called for a multi-sectoral, inclusive approach based on epidemiology and human rights. The board also asked UNAIDS to continue to advocate for prevention tools (male and female condoms, vaccines, microbicides) and include this in the update on resource tracking in the 27<sup>th</sup> PCB meeting in December 2010.

### **UNAIDS Second Independent Evaluation**

The board did not go into the details of the findings of the Second Independent Evaluation (SIE) of UNAIDS, but focused on the recommendations of the evaluation team and the management response of UNAIDS. The document has many important findings for civil society and is a potential advocacy tool. The summary and translation of the report, the response of the NGO Delegation, and the sign on letter presented to the board can be found at [www.unaidspcbngo.org](http://www.unaidspcbngo.org), as well as the full evaluation report and annexes. The information of the evaluation report can be used beyond this meeting in improving the work of UNAIDS. It is important that we as civil society monitor UNAIDS' changes in light of this report.

To officially follow up on the evaluation, the board agreed to create a task force to follow up on governance issues and oversee the implementation of recommendations by creating and monitoring a work plan related to the evaluation. Civil society will be included in this task force, which will be formed in January 2010.

Of the many recommendations aimed at improving ways of working, notably amongst the Cosponsors at country level, there are several that are important specifically for civil society:

- UNAIDS will develop a distinct partnership strategy for working with civil society and PLHIV. This will include developing a shared vision for this plan and empowering key populations. The NGO Delegation will push for a strengthened civil society partnership unit within UNAIDS, the inclusion of regional caucuses with civil society and participation in parts of regional management meetings as ways to improve participation of civil society.
- The Technical Support Strategy of UNAIDS will be presented in the June 2010 PCB meeting. The NGO Delegation pointed out that this strategy must be comprehensive and coherent. This strategy should clarify the role and comparative advantage of civil society.
- Based on evaluation findings of weak performance in this area, the board passed a decision point calling on UNAIDS to strengthen its focus on gender and human rights. This will include a review of the division of labor around cross-cutting issues. The board specified the need to determine clear global objectives for work on HIV and gender, gender equality, human rights and key populations including women and girls, and that gender equality and human rights analysis should be integral to 'knowing your epidemic' and to joint programmes of support for national responses.

### **Impact of the global financial and economic crisis on the AIDS response**

This report was a follow up to the civil society-initiated decision of the 23<sup>rd</sup> PCB to carry out a review of the impacts of the current global economic situation on the AIDS response. According to the report, the areas in the AIDS response hardest hit by the financial crisis have been funding for civil society groups and prevention initiatives. The board welcomed this report and asked UNAIDS to support countries in mitigating the impact of the economic crisis. The board also called on UNAIDS to bring together HIV and AIDS funders such as the Global Fund and bilateral donors to work together to address funding issues related to the crisis. A follow up report to monitor the situation will be prepared for the 27<sup>th</sup> PCB, to be held in December 2010.

### **New Board Officers**

As of January 1, 2010, the Netherlands will become the Chair, El Salvador the Vice Chair and Japan the Rapporteur of the PCB.

### **Reminder: What is the PCB again?**

The [Programme Coordinating Board](#) (PCB) is the governing body of UNAIDS. It is made up of 22 voting Member States, the 10 UN Cosponsors that make up the UNAIDS program, and a NGO Delegation (consisting of one delegate and one alternate from each of 5 regions).

#### **How can I learn more?**

Please visit our website at: [www.unaidspcbngo.org](http://www.unaidspcbngo.org)