



**NGO**  
DELEGATION TO THE  
**UNAIDS PCB**

54th PCB Meeting

# PCB Summary Bulletin

25 until 27 June 2024

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## Introduction

### **Shamin Mohamed Jr. | North American Delegate**

The 54th UNAIDS PCB Meeting commenced with considerations about the previous meeting report, followed by the Executive Director's report, which critically analyzed the global response to HIV and emphasized the urgent need for a holistic approach to ensure sustainability based on human dignity. Discussions covered varied interpretations of sustainability, the urgency of accelerating HIV prevention efforts, and the integration of HIV services into broader health systems. The first day also saw Co-sponsors reaffirming their commitment to the Joint Programme and stressing the need to continue mobilizing financial resources. An active session on Leadership in the HIV Response by Ms. Precious Matsoso urged political leaders to address inequality with the same vigor used in vaccine development. Additionally, actions from the last thematic segment at the 53rd PCB meeting, which focused on Testing and HIV, were reviewed.

On the second day, discussions shifted to UNAIDS' financial situation and strategic management of human resources. The challenging economic landscape and significant investment gaps threatening the HIV response were highlighted. The 2022-2023 reports showed that cost containment measures and innovative work methods were implemented to mitigate financial shortfalls. While these measures kept the Joint Programme operational, they also reduced its ability to perform core functions and catalytic work. Still, on the second day, the NGO delegation agreed to hold the 55th PCB Meeting in Kenya, believing this would bring stakeholders closer to the realities of the Global South. However, concerns were raised about the safety of people in same-sex relationships, urging member countries to revoke laws that criminalize LGBTIQ+ individuals and fail to recognize transgender identities.

The third day focused on the thematic segment "Sustaining the Gains of the Global HIV Response to 2030 and Beyond," involving governments, multilateral agencies, and civil society representatives. Participants discussed the urgency of sustainability planning and response. It was evident that achieving sustainability requires reducing new infections, AIDS-related deaths, and stigma and discrimination. Ensuring lifelong treatment and care for all people living with HIV also demands political, financial, and programmatic sustainability.

## Report of the Executive Director

### **Martha Clara Nakato | Africa Delegate**

The executive director's report underscored the critical crisis facing the global HIV response and called for a comprehensive understanding of sustainability that extends beyond financial considerations. It emphasized the urgent need for an accelerated holistic approach prioritizing stronger political will, strategic programmatic direction, and a steadfast commitment to upholding human dignity. The report stressed that such a vision, which enhances local ownership and ensures sustained control of the HIV response beyond 2030, is

only possible with the active involvement of communities. This approach also safeguards the well-being of people living with HIV and communities at risk of acquiring HIV.

A key challenge highlighted in the report is the varied interpretations of sustainability. While some stakeholders see it as a signal to scale back efforts, UNAIDS advocates for a vision that includes acceleration and innovation to reduce new HIV infections, which currently far exceed the targets set for 2025. The report strongly emphasized the need for sustained funding for strengthening resilient health systems, including affordable and accessible medicines, and intensified HIV prevention efforts for adolescent girls and young women, young people, and key populations. It stressed that human rights and gender equality are essential for fostering resilient community leadership and sustainability.

The NGO Delegation emphasized the urgent need for Member States to move beyond complacency and take deliberate actions to sustain the HIV response. It highlighted the critical role that UNAIDS plays in ensuring that communities remain relevant in the HIV response, stressing that funding for the Joint Programme must be maintained.

However, the delegation expressed disappointment with the UNAIDS secretariat, describing their relationship as "inauthentic." They noted they risk losing the valuable community voice in this decision-making space if the secretariat does not find solutions to sustain and support the NGO delegation's relevance as a meaningful partner at the PCB. They pointed out significant issues, such as consistent budget constraints that have left core activities unfunded and the failure to secure free passes for the delegation to the AIDS Conference 2024.

## Report by the Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations

### **Gastón Devisich | Latin America and the Caribbean Delegate**

The 54th PCB Meeting saw the presentation of the UNAIDS Co-Sponsor Organizations Report, which highlighted significant progress and ongoing challenges in the global HIV response. The Co-Sponsors (CCOs) reiterated their commitment to the Joint Programme's mission and the need for continued resource mobilization, aligning with the Secretariat's value proposition. The critical need for improved collaboration and communication processes to foster trust among CCOs and the Secretariat remains a key focus.

The 57th Committee of CCOs meeting in Santiago de Chile saw the discussion of a proposal for a high-level panel aimed at revisiting the operating model to enhance the effectiveness and sustainability of the Joint Programme. However, concerns persist among the Delegation regarding the ongoing funding crisis, and there are questions about whether Cosponsors are considering re-integrating the Secretariat's functions into their own, potentially leading to the dissolution of UNAIDS. A daunting thought that underscores the precariousness of our current situation.

The report underscored the importance of integrating HIV efforts with broader health and social initiatives, acknowledging the challenges posed by reduced HIV-specific funding and legal, social, and economic inequities that hinder access to HIV services. The CCOs' commitment to addressing human rights, gender equality, and community leadership as core components of the global HIV response is heartening, yet it's clear that much work remains to be done.

Looking ahead, UNAIDS must navigate its role within the evolving global HIV landscape and establish its rightful place to continue driving progress toward ending AIDS by 2030. The delegation agrees that this requires unwavering determination and strategic foresight. The Joint Programme's multisectoral approach and collective action will be crucial in achieving these goals while ensuring a cohesive and integrated response that includes all stakeholders.

## Leadership in the AIDS response

### Fionnuala Murphy | European Delegate

The 54<sup>th</sup> PCB meeting featured an activating session on Leadership In the AIDS response, delivered by the esteemed Ms. Precious Matsoso, former Director General of South Africa's Ministry of Health and current co-chair of the Intergovernmental Negotiating Body responsible for reaching agreement on a new global Pandemic Accord.

Stepping back from the detail of the Pandemic Treaty discussions, which recently stalled in part due to a failure to reach an agreement around critical areas, including equitable access to health technologies, Ms. Matsoso's address recalled the history of the HIV response, during which 12 million people in Africa died due to lack of access to antiretroviral treatment widely available in other parts of the world. She drew parallels with the more recent experience of COVID-19 vaccine inequality, cautioning PCB members that "when you repeat a mistake, it is no longer a mistake. It is a choice."

With a wisdom and relevance that echoed far beyond the immediate topic, Ms. Matsoso strongly directed political leaders to tackle inequality with the same vigor with which vaccines have been developed.

"Injustice is not acceptable," she told PCB members. "We must make the right choices - an important act that can save lives."

In response, the NGO delegation voiced its concerns that the draft Pandemic Accord has not incorporated lessons from HIV on the importance of human rights, equitable access to health technologies, or community-led responses, and equally worryingly, does not include a commitment to continue work towards ending AIDS. We urged PCB members to work together towards a Pandemic Accord that will build on and strengthen the AIDS responses, with convening and leadership from UNAIDS. We also raised concerns about the absence of HIV or health in the draft Pact for the Future, which will be finalized at this year's UN General Assembly.

## Follow-up to the thematic segment from the 53<sup>rd</sup> Programme Coordinating Board meeting

### Myles Mwansa | African Delegate

In 2021, Member States committed to reducing new HIV infections to fewer than 370,000 per year by 2025. By 2024, progress has fallen short, with only a tiny fraction of the target achieved. 14% of the 39 million people living with HIV are unaware of their status. There were 1.3 million new HIV infections, indicating a serious concern. HIV testing and treatment are critical for controlling the HIV epidemic.

#### Actions needed:

- Make HIV testing and prevention options available, affordable, and accessible for all, including Adolescent Girls and Young Women, Men & Boys, and Priority and Key populations.
- Invest in strengthening data collection and management systems for timely and accurate data, facilitating better monitoring, evaluation, and data-driven decision-making.
- Address stigma and discrimination that hinder marginalized individuals from accessing HIV services; tackle HIV/Sex work and LGBTIQ+ criminalization, including laws/policies restricting young people's access to Sexual and Reproductive Health services.
- Strengthen partnerships and share responsibility in the Joint Programme.
- Empower communities to drive HIV testing programs and access testing, with governments creating supportive environments for community leadership and involvement.

During the drafting of this decision point, there was notable tension and some resistance regarding the inclusion of decriminalization as a strategy to enhance HIV testing rates. The NGO delegation strongly advocated for the accelerated implementation of differentiated testing approaches, the importance of community-led testing initiatives, and the consideration of Undetectable = Untransmittable (U=U) messaging. Additionally, there was an in-depth discussion on the cultural appropriateness of legal provisions concerning the age of consent for HIV testing and the application of TRIPS flexibilities to improve access to testing technologies.

# Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) 2022-2026; Performance Monitoring Reporting

## Aleksei Lakhov | European Delegate

According to the 2023 UBRAF Performance Monitoring Report, the worsening human rights situation in various regions is hindering efforts to end AIDS. The backlash against gender equality and the rights of women, girls, LGBTQ+ individuals, and other groups threatens to undo progress in the HIV response.

The 2022–2023 biennium presented the Joint Programme with significant programmatic and operational challenges. Due to funding shortfalls, the Secretariat implemented extensive cost-containment measures and innovative new working methods. The UNAIDS operating budget of US\$ 160 million for 2022–2023 represents the minimum required for the Joint Programme to fulfill its mandate. The updated resource mobilization strategy aims to maintain and expand support from current donors while broadening the donor base to achieve a fully funded UBRAF.

Going forward, the Joint Programme will further emphasize four strategic priorities: improving HIV prevention, increasing access to HIV treatment and new technologies, supporting community-led responses, and ensuring equitable and sustainable financing for the HIV response, stressing the need for a long-term commitment to address this issue.

The Delegation was concerned with the Joint Programme's funding shortfalls and their impact on its performance, especially on the data gathering and monitoring that are the cornerstones of UNAIDS. However, the Secretariat assured delegates that cost-cutting measures would not impede tracking progress in global HIV response.

# Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) 2022-2026; Financial Reporting

## Xavier Biggs | Latin America and the Caribbean Delegate

Agenda Item 4.2 focused on the UNAIDS financial situation. It reiterated the accepted \$160 million annual (320 million biannual) budget for 2024 and 2025. This \$160 million is the lowest of the three funding scenarios presented at the 53<sup>rd</sup> PCB Meeting in December 2023. The associated collection for the year 2024 is, however, projected to fall short by 20 million, as only 140 million has so far been committed to UNAIDS

This agenda also highlighted the impactful cost management strategies employed during 2022-2023. The report emphasized that 'Multiple initiatives, including the freezing of recruitment, postponement of asset purchases where practical, the promotion of reduced or shared office space and limiting of international travel, were successfully implemented. These

measures ensured that the Secretariat's expenses remained within its reduced prioritized share of the core UBRAF.'

Another noteworthy strategy was the proposal to align the UNAIDS fund balance, currently at 22% of the biannual Budget, with the newly agreed budget of 320 million USD. This strategic alignment is crucial for the effective management of UNAIDS resources.

The internal controls statement reported a top risk to the joint program: "Changing agenda and priorities of strategic partners, including Cosponsors and other stakeholders."

UNAIDS (in response) plans to

- Increase advocacy efforts, engaging with governments, decision-makers, and donors in countries and at the global level.
- Deliver strong and consistent messaging internally and externally (through communications and commitment of resources) on top priorities.
- Enhance visibility on HIV-related work of Cosponsors and further mainstreaming HIV into their broader mandates and expertise.
- Demonstrate the relevance of and lessons from the HIV response to competing priorities and relevant related agendas, such as sexual and reproductive health and rights.

The NGO delegation applauds the joint program's effort to welcome these initiatives. We continue to support them and call on member states (and other donor partners) to fully fund the UBRAF, as there is still more work to be done toward ending the AIDS epidemic.

## Update on strategic human resources management issues

### **Midnight Poonkasetwattana | Asia and the Pacific Delegate**

The NGO delegation welcomes the positive report, as the Secretariat completed the realignment process in 2023:

- The multicountry office model has been expanded, national positions have been created, and the structure of country teams has been harmonized.
- Staff moved from the Global Centre in Geneva to Johannesburg, Bangkok, and Nairobi, and the Secretariat moved some teams from Geneva to Bonn.
- The Middle East and North Africa Regional Office was closed, and oversight of Country Offices was relocated to the Western and Central Africa and the Eastern and Southern Africa Regional Offices.
- A new model involving the placement of HIV advisers in Resident Coordinator's Offices has been piloted in five countries.

In 2023, 83 staff members left, UNAIDS recruited 114 staff, and the total number of Secretariat staff stabilized at 646.



As the staff is UNAIDS' most valuable asset, The People Strategy is currently in implementation, which includes:

- Investment in learning, development, and growth
- Enhancing gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion and antiracism
- Leveraging new ways of working
- Enforcing respectful conduct and zero-tolerance
- Supporting staff well-being and engagement

In 2025, UNAIDS is looking to recruit more young people to the organization through the "Young Leadership Fellowship," a pilot initiative to reach out to young people from key populations. Through this fellowship, UNAIDS will create opportunities to build and strengthen personal and community leadership skills and foster a vibrant network of change leaders within UNAIDS.

The NGO delegation hopes there will be more staff from the key population in UNAIDS.

## Statement by the representative of the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association

### [Cecilia Chung | North American Delegate](#)

The USSA presents below a summary of outstanding issues that staff would like the Senior Management to address:

The key areas identified were:

- Staff well-being, including mental health and workload issues.
- Harassment and abuse of authority
- (Re)alignment and mobility
- Career advancement
- Fairness and transparency in policy implementation

The staff association reported improved communication between staff and management, but there is plenty of room for improvement in fairness and transparency.

USSA also strongly advocates for the organization's adoption and alignment of feminist principles, which can significantly promote equality and diversity in management.

# Independent Organizational Oversight Reports and Management Response

## Sonal Giani | Asia and the Pacific Delegate

During the 54th UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) Meeting, we reviewed the internal audit reports for 2023. The discussion highlighted significant achievements as well as ongoing challenges.

The reports showed notable progress in our internal controls. The effectiveness rate of controls tested was 71%, a marked improvement from 55% in 2022. This progress is evident in the closure of 12 audits and a significant drop in overdue audit recommendations. Better management and accountability practices are taking hold, which is encouraging.

However, there are still areas that need our attention. The high residual risk associated with Direct Financial Cooperation (DFC) and Programme Funding Agreements (PFAs) remains a significant concern. Despite improvements, these mechanisms still need improvement to ensure resources effectively reach local initiatives. The need for greater transparency and efficiency in these processes was a key point of discussion.

The reports also highlighted an increase in allegations of non-financial misconduct, including sexual exploitation, harassment, and abuse. This is deeply troubling and underscores the need for robust measures to prevent and address such issues. Full implementation of WHO's Policy on Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct (PASM) and mandatory staff training were emphasized as crucial steps.

On a positive note, the management of non-commercial agreements has improved, resulting in a 47% reduction in overdue reports. This progress is a step in the right direction, ensuring resources are used efficiently and support reaches those who need it.

Despite these improvements, some recurring issues need a more holistic approach to achieve sustainable improvements, particularly in post facto assurance and documentation of DFC and PFA support.

Overall, the internal audit reports provided a valuable snapshot of where we stand regarding governance, risk management, and internal controls. The discussions at the PCB meeting emphasized the need for continuous improvement and vigilance to ensure UNAIDS can effectively support the communities it serves. Committing to addressing these challenges and building on our progress is crucial for the organization's success.

## 55th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board

### Shamin Mohamed Jr. | North American Delegate

The NGO delegation congratulates Kenya, which will host the 55th UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) Meeting in Nairobi on December 10-12, 2024, and commends its financial commitment. However, concerns are raised about the safety of transgender participants due to potential discrimination based on their gender status within their passports.

The NGO Delegation emphasizes the importance of decriminalizing transgender people and individuals in same-sex relationships, as 32% of UN member states still have punitive laws against them. Hosting the PCB in the *Global South* presents an opportunity to engage with marginalized communities and understand their needs better. Member States are challenged to embrace discomfort and work towards a more inclusive world.

## Thematic Segment: Testing and HIV

### Fionnuala Murphy | European Delegate

Florence Riako-Anam of GNP+ powerfully opened the thematic session on sustainability. Speaking alongside the UNAIDS ED, Botswana's Minister of Health, Mr Edwin Dikoloti, and the former President, Florence, painted a personal picture of how far the HIV response had come, reflecting on her own experiences as a young mother newly diagnosed with HIV. Setting the tone for the discussions to follow, she issued a clear statement on how moves towards sustainability cannot take place at a cost to service quality for people living with HIV.

This core message was reflected several times, from the framing remarks offered by the World Bank, World Health Organization, and UNAIDS to the three roundtables. Speaking about Kenya's experience moving towards Universal Health Coverage, Dr. Ruth Laibon-Masha emphasized that "when we talk about sustainability, we need to talk about lives."

The roundtables featured four community and civil leaders put forward by the NGO delegation. On the first of these, Edwin Bernard, Executive Director of the HIV Justice Network, highlighted how the criminalization of people living with HIV and key populations was undermining sustainability, challenging PCB delegates to "stop wasting money on ineffective, counterproductive criminalization and invest in proven treatment and prevention programs."

The second roundtable featured Cindy Kelemi from the Botswana Network on Ethics, the Law, and HIV/AIDS, which urged governments, donors, and other stakeholders engaged in sustainability and transition planning first to assess the current situation, arguing that "if we integrate the HIV response into an already ailing system, we run the risk of eroding the gains we've achieved." Emphasizing community systems as an integral component of health systems, with an essential role in reaching key populations, she asked UNAIDS to provide model strategies for community systems strengthening and engagement. Sharing experience from the Eastern Europe and Central Asia region, Ganna Dovbakh followed with a passionate call for coordinated efforts among communities, civil society, politicians, experts, and international stakeholders to address the challenges of shrinking space for civil society and

communities and to counter political leaders who promote hate, homophobia and the war on drugs—on the final panel, which featured Ambassador John Nkengasong from PEPFAR and Peter Sands of the Global Fund, Keren Dunaway from the International Community of Women Living with HIV made a clear case for the provision of long-term, sustainable, and core funding for women-led, youth-led and community-led responses.

The PCB will decide on the decision points from the thematic segment later in the year. The NGO delegation will engage carefully in this process to ensure that they include commitments to deliver on the UNAIDS 10-10-10 targets (on punitive laws and policies, stigma and discrimination, and gender inequality and violence), to increase sustainable funding for community responses, and to address the risks that integration can pose for people living with HIV, key populations, and other communities most affected. It is also critical that these concerns are reflected in the national sustainability roadmaps that are currently under development in many countries. We are grateful to the many organizations that helped us formulate these recommendations, select civil society speakers, and shape the [background note](#) for the thematic segment through the Civil Society Advisory Group. We look forward to further collaboration.