



**NGO
DELEGATION TO THE
UNAIDS PCB**

The NGO Delegation's

Terms of Reference

Last updated August 2023

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Introduction and purposes of this document

This Terms of Reference (ToR) document is to inform—in conjunction with the Call for Nominations—non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and their representatives considering applying for a seat on the NGO Delegation of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB). The Call for Nominations and subsequent selection of NGO delegates is undertaken by the current NGO Delegation to the PCB (see [The selection process](#)). This document specifies the term of office, qualifications, and commitments required to serve on the NGO Delegation.

This document is also an operations reference tool for the current NGO Delegation.

This document was produced as a result of decision 9.1 taken at the 20th Meeting (June 2007) of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board arising from the 2006 Review of NGO and Civil Society participation in the Programme Coordinating Board.¹ This document was updated in October 2012.² The NGO Delegation did subsequent updates through the years as the mandate, scope of responsibilities, and ways of working evolved. The last update was done in 2020.

NOTA BENE: The UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation Vision, Mission, Principles, and Code of Conduct must also be considered and agreed to by NGOs and their representatives applying for a seat on the NGO Delegation.

¹ This document was contracted and funded by the UNAIDS Secretariat. It was written, based in part upon an existing Terms of Reference, in 2007/2008 by T. Richard Corcoran, consultant and former PCB NGO Delegate (2004-06), with input and support from a steering committee (consisting of PCB NGO delegates and a representative of the UNAIDS Secretariat) and reviewed by advisors outside the NGO Delegation who were selected by the steering committee. Additions and changes to UNAIDS and Delegation processes and policies were revised in this document in October 2012 by the NGO Delegation and CCF.

² For further details, see the *Consolidated Guidance Note, 2010: UNAIDS Division of Labour*: [UNAIDS Division of Labour](#).

A. Definitions for this document:

The definitions below are not exhaustive technical definitions, but instead they are brief, user-friendly definitions to clarify and streamline the terminology used in this document.

NOTE: Terms in **bold** used within the definitions in this section are defined in subsequent definitions.

1. UNAIDS

UNAIDS (the *Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS*) is the United Nations (UN) body coordinating the HIV-related work of its eleven Cosponsors and providing global leadership on HIV policies and issues.

2. Programme Coordinating Board (PCB)

The Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) is the governing body (effectively, the Board of Directors) of UNAIDS that guides, reviews, and makes decisions about the policies, priorities, long-range plans, and budgets of UNAIDS.

There are 38 seats on the PCB: 22 Member States, 11 Cosponsors, and 5 NGOs.

3. Member States

Member States (i.e., governments) hold 22 seats on the PCB: Western European and Others Group (7 seats); Africa (5 seats); Asia and Pacific (5 seats); Latin America and the Caribbean (3 seats); Eastern European/Commonwealth of Independent States (2 seats). The Member States are selected from among the UN Member States. They serve on the PCB for a term of 3 years on a rotation basis. Only the Member States have the right to vote on the PCB.

4. Cosponsoring Organizations (Cosponsors)

The 11 UN Cosponsoring Organizations of UNAIDS are UNHCR; UNICEF; WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO, the World Bank; and (as of 2012) UN Women. Each holds a continuous seat on the PCB. The Cosponsors do not have voting rights on the PCB. Cosponsor support for UNAIDS is focused on 15 areas based on the UNAIDS outcome framework for 2009–2011. Each area has one or two convening agencies (with relevant mandates and technical expertise) to facilitate the contributions of broader UNAIDS family partners and ensure the quality of overall results in the respective area.³

³ Economic and Social Council, Resolution 1995/2

5. Nongovernmental Organizations⁴ (NGOs)

Nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) hold five seats on the PCB. Eligible NGOs include local, national, regional, and international NGOs, networks of people living with HIV (PLHIV Networks), AIDS service organizations (ASOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), AIDS activist organizations, faith-based organizations (FBOs) and networks or coalitions of AIDS organizations. Collectively, these are referred to as NGOs. NGOs are further defined as not-for-profit and working *primarily* and actively in the field of HIV (i.e., the main purpose or one of the main purposes of the NGO, association, or network is its work in the HIV field).

There is one seat for each of these five regions: Africa, Asia/The Pacific, Europe, Latin America/The Caribbean, and North America. The five [main delegates](#) occupy these seats. Additionally, five [alternate delegates](#) (one from each of the same five regions) participate in [the delegation](#).

Though technically, the NGO (the organization, and not the person representing the organization) holds the seat on the PCB, a specific representative of the NGO applies to fill the seat. Due to the challenges and steep learning curve of serving as an NGO delegate to the PCB, this single representative is to serve for the full term of service.

Suppose this individual cannot fulfill any part of their commitment. In that case, the delegation may ask the NGO to provide another qualified representative as a replacement for the remainder of the delegate's term, subject to the approval of the NGO Delegation.

Though technically, NGOs do not have “*the right to take part in the formal decision-making process*” of the PCB, in practice, NGOs fully participate and are essential, respected stakeholders in decision-making processes. They do not, however, have voting rights.

NGOs normally serve on the PCB for two years but may be extended to a maximum term of three years. The term of office is further defined below (see [Term of office](#)).

6. Main delegate

As noted above, the organizations hold the five NGO seats on the PCB. The person sitting in the seat is delegated to represent that organization and is known as an NGO delegate. At formal meetings, the five seats are identified as NGO Africa, NGO Asia/Pacific, NGO Europe, NGO Latin America/Caribbean, and NGO North America, a further acknowledgment that the seat is held by the NGO (organization) and not the person.

By default, the NGOs' main delegates from their respective regions occupy the five NGO seats at formal PCB meetings. However, the [alternate delegate](#) from that region may occupy the seat when the main delegate is absent or when it is deemed appropriate by both delegates from the region or [the delegation](#) to do so (for strategic, logistic, or any other reason).

Although officially, there are only five seats held by the five main delegates, in practice and for ease throughout this document, both main delegate and [alternate delegate](#)

⁴ This is specifically not a definition of the general term Nongovernmental Organization, but one relative to the role of NGOs on the PCB.

are referred to as delegate unless a distinction is required. Unless otherwise noted, there are no distinctions in practice between the main and alternate delegates regarding their qualifications, commitments, and participation in all aspects of [the delegation](#) and the PCB.

7. Alternate delegate

Though there are only five formal NGO seats on the PCB, ten delegates are appointed to [the delegation](#): five main and five alternate delegates. Doubling the number of delegates provides enough capacity to carry out the mission and business of [the delegation](#) and to provide overlapping terms of office of the main and alternate delegates from each region to ensure the transfer of skills and a smooth transition from alternate to main delegate. It also helps to provide institutional memory for [the delegation](#).

An [incoming delegate](#) is usually designated as the alternate delegate for their region when their term begins, and the existing delegate becomes the main delegate for the region. When the main delegate's term is completed, the alternate delegate usually becomes the main delegate.

8. Incoming delegate

Incoming delegates are persons who have submitted a successful application to participate in the delegation (by mutual agreement between [the delegation](#) and the applicant) but have not yet begun their term of office, which is approved at the subsequent board meeting after their appointment. The term incoming is not a formal designation. (See [Requirements and requests of the incoming Delegate](#).)

9. Observer NGOs (observers)

In addition to [the delegation](#), observer NGOs (Observers) attend the formal PCB meetings. Any individual or representative from an organization or network may register to attend. Still, they must incur their costs and be vetted and approved by the UNAIDS Secretariat. They may speak in plenary after all PCB members (Member States, Cosponsors, and Non-Governmental Organizations) have done so. During the board meeting, [the delegation](#) invites the Observers to attend pre-meeting and daily briefings to share information, collaborate, and strategize.

Incoming delegates attending PCB meetings (See [Requirements and requests of the incoming Delegate](#)) are considered observer NGOs.

10. NGO Delegation (the delegation)

In reality, it could be argued that there are five NGO Delegations: one from each of the five regions, each comprised of the main delegate and the alternate delegate from that region. For ease and throughout this document, however, the ten NGO delegates are collectively called the NGO Delegation (the delegation).

11. Civil society

Is defined as the broad array of people working for or with NGOs (as defined above) actively engaged in local, national, regional, or global HIV issues. The delegates represent their respective regional civil society on the PCB as its constituency, and, more broadly, the delegation represents civil society at large as its constituency.

12. UNAIDS Secretariat (the Secretariat)

The UNAIDS Secretariat comprises the executive director and the technical and administrative staff required to carry out the work of UNAIDS and its governing board, the PCB.

Though the delegation is largely autonomous (see [Statement of autonomy](#)), the work of the delegation is also supported by and in collaboration with the Secretariat, in particular the Governance and Multilateral Affairs Department, which manages relations with the Board and offers strategic support, and the Community Mobilization team, which engages with civil society.

13. Communications and Consultation Facility (CCF)

At its 20th meeting, the PCB recommended: “the establishment of an independent communication facility (CF) to strengthen the NGO participation and support effectiveness of NGO country-level voices in the Programme Coordinating Board policy dialogue.” In 2013, the CCF was expanded to include ‘consultation’ in its function, i.e., facilitating constituency engagement and outreach, as a mandate of the NGO Delegation. Thus, its name was expanded to CCF (Communication and Consultation Facility). The UNAIDS Secretariat funds the PCB NGO Communication and Consultation Facility. A recruited NGO hosts the CCF independently based on two-year contracts. The implementation of activities, performance management, and overall responsibility for achieving deliverables belong to the delegation.

The CCF provides the delegation with a base for independent support. It aims to support the delegation based on an independent position and help them communicate transparent and fluidly among themselves and others. The four main tasks of the CCF are:

- Facilitate fluid communications to and from NGO delegates with civil society, UNAIDS Cosponsors, UNAIDS Secretariat, and UNAIDS Member States;
- Support for efficient management of the administrative and logistical needs of the PCB NGO Delegation;
- Ensure a means of communication and appraisal amongst delegates and support to help delegates to communicate among themselves; and
- Help to have a transparent information exchange between all stakeholders.

2008-2010, the CCF was hosted at the World AIDS Campaign in Amsterdam, Netherlands. From 2010-2012, the host was ICASO in Toronto, Canada. From 2013 to 2021, the Asia-Pacific Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS (APN+), based in Bangkok, Thailand, hosted the CCF. Since 2022, the Global Network of People living with HIV/AIDS, based in Amsterdam and Cape Town, hosts the CCF.

B. Statement of autonomy

Except as limited by the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) Resolution 1995/2, formal PCB decisions—in particular the Modus Operandi of the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS (rev. June 1999)—and any subsequent decisions that may have been or may be taken, the delegation operates autonomously. It is free to refine and redefine these Terms of Reference as necessary.

C. Mission⁵

The Mission of the delegation is

To bring forward the perspectives and expertise of people living with, affected by, most at risk of, and vulnerable to HIV and AIDS, as well as civil society, to ensure that UNAIDS is guided by rights-based, equitable and gender-based approach to guarantee access to comprehensive HIV prevention, treatment, care and support for all.

D. Term of office

The term of office for an NGO is two calendar years.

In the interest of providing overlapping terms of office of the Main and alternate delegate from each region, ensuring institutional memory for the delegation, and ensuring that alternate delegates transfer skills and transition smoothly to the main delegate for each region. The term of office may be extended for one additional calendar year. This extension is subject to the availability and agreement of both the delegate and their NGO, as well as the agreement or decision of the delegation.

As restricted by the ECOSOC Resolution 1995/2, the term for any Delegate may not exceed three calendar years. An NGO may not serve for more than two terms.

For delegates appointed intersessionally, under exceptional circumstances outside of the Election of Officers agenda item during the December PCB meeting, the expected end of service will align with the end of a calendar year. Meaning that there will be only one procedure per year for the assessment and subsequent recruitment of NGO delegates, taking place in the second half of a calendar year

⁵ See the [UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation Vision, Mission, and Guiding Principles](#), for how the delegation accomplishes this Mission.

E. Operating language

Although it may result in an unfortunate exclusivity of much of CS, the operating language of the delegation is English⁶, and it is, therefore, a key requirement that delegates are fully able to communicate well in both written and spoken English. Native English speakers on the delegation are requested to remain mindful and considerate of the challenges that delegates whose native tongue is not English may face.

F. Qualifications of the applying NGO:

Though applications to serve on the delegation are submitted by individuals representing NGOs, the NGO itself holds the seat on the PCB. Organizations cannot apply for two consecutive terms. However, they can reapply after observing at least one term of absence. To qualify to hold the seat on the PCB, the applying NGO must:

1. Be actively and principally involved with HIV work in the country and region for which the applicant is applying;
2. Maintain a comprehensive understanding of the health, political, and social consequences and needs of the HIV epidemic, particularly as it relates to its region;
3. Be strongly connected to and actively liaise with national and regional community and CS networks; and
4. Have extensive experience in national, regional, or international policy-making and advocacy.

G. Qualifications of the applying delegate:

To qualify to represent its NGO on the PCB, an applicant for the position of Delegate must:

1. Have permanent residency in and be living and working in a country within the region for which they are applying to represent;
2. Have the ability to communicate effectively in written and spoken English;
3. Have adequate skills to analyze relevant policy documents, papers, and reports.
4. Have practical writing skills for interventions;
5. Be computer literate;
6. Have stable access to the Internet and email;
7. Have at least three years of experience in HIV work in their region;
8. Have the ability to collaborate well with a diverse group of people from different cultures worldwide;
9. Have the facility to work strategically in a group;

⁶ Formal PCB documents are circulated in English and French. Additionally, the CCF translates certain documents, such as NGO Reports and consultations, into Arabic, Chinese, French, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish and, at the delegation's request, into other local languages as needed. At formal PCB meetings, simultaneous interpretation is provided in the Plenary (the main meeting room) in the following six official UN languages: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian, and Spanish. Other languages may be available.

10. Have diplomacy skills;
11. Have some comfort with public speaking; and
12. Have some experience in national, regional, and international advocacy.

H. Commitments of the applying NGO:

The NGO must state in its letter of recommendation for the applying Delegate that the NGO:

1. Authorizes the applying Delegate to represent the NGO as its Delegate on the PCB;
2. Commits to the UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation Mission, Principles, and Code of Conduct;
3. Will support their Delegate for the term of their office so that they will be able to fulfill the Commitments of the applying Delegate (see J. of this document) by confirming that the applicant:
 - Will provide access to adequate office space, equipment, supplies, and communication facilities;
 - Will be freed up from their regular duties to be able to dedicate a minimum of 10 hours per work week;
 - Will be additionally freed up from their regular duties to travel to attend the formal PCB meetings (including pre-meetings and debriefing meetings) and the NGO orientation meetings;
 - Will have organizational and administrative support;
4. Will ensure the quality and comprehensiveness of the applying Delegate's participation on the PCB; and
5. Will ensure that, if the delegate is unable to complete their term of office, an equally qualified replacement, if available, will be offered by the NGO to finish the term of office. The full delegation adopts the final decision.

I. Commitments of the applying delegate:

To participate as an NGO Delegate to the PCB, the applying Delegate must commit to:

1. The UNAIDS PCB NGO Delegation Mission, Principles and Code of Conduct;
2. Spending a minimum of 10 hours per week performing the duties of Delegate;
3. Broadly and in collaboration with the CCF, consulting with, seeking input from, learning about relevant issues of, and reporting to their national and regional CS;
4. Attending and actively participating in key meetings including but not limited to:
 - Biannual PCB meetings (5 to 6 days each) typically in Geneva, Switzerland, in late June to early July and early to mid-December. These meetings include an NGO Delegation strategy pre-meeting (1 day), NGO Delegation pre-meetings with Board members and other relevant stakeholders (1 day), the PCB meeting (3 days), and the NGO Delegation debriefing meeting (1 day). The December meeting usually includes an extra induction day for incoming delegates;
5. Attending, actively participating in, or representing (and reporting back to) the delegation at other meetings and consultations as necessary and when possible.

Some examples are high-level meetings (HLM) of the UN General Assembly in New York, regional consultations, PCB consultations on developing policies, the PCB Bureau, etc.

6. Actively participating in full delegation virtual meetings (average 1 per month), usually held at 15:00 Geneva time and lasting 1-2 hours.
7. Maintaining timely communications with the delegation and other PCB bodies via email and instant messaging applications, e.g., Telegram or WhatsApp;
8. Reading, absorbing, and being prepared to engage in the issues of all relevant PCB documents on time;
9. Actively participating and strategizing with the delegation in the review and planning processes of the PCB and UNAIDS;
10. Actively participating in and chairing a fair share of working groups as needed. Some examples are the NGO Report working group, PCB Thematic Session working group, Orientation, Accountability, Recruitment working group, etc. Virtual meetings are generally required for these and can be held once or twice a month (or as needed), usually lasting for an hour.
11. Working in collaboration with the Secretariat; and
12. Coordinating, communicating, and working with the CCF on time.

J. Requirements and requests of the incoming delegates:

Depending upon the current calendar, the incoming delegates may need to:

1. Dependent on funding and availability, attend an NGO Orientation in December or before the meeting of approval for the incoming Delegate or
2. Participate in a physical or online/virtual orientation process⁷.
3. Participate in PCB NGO virtual meetings after being selected.

Though not strictly required, in the interest of the further orientation of incoming delegates, in advance of the beginning of the term of office, the incoming delegates may be invited to:

1. Dependent on funding and availability, attend the June or December PCB meetings as an observer; and
2. Participate in PCB NGO virtual meetings.

K. The selection process:

Incoming delegates are selected through the following process:

1. Each year, a Call for Nominations for the upcoming regional openings is broadly circulated electronically via mailing lists worldwide, usually in August;

⁷ A virtual, online orientation process has been developed to assist in interim turnover of representatives for delegated NGOs and to replace an in-person orientation due to limited funds provided by the UNAIDS Secretariat.

2. The current delegation—facilitated by the CCF —autonomously conducts the selection process;
3. Applications are rated and discussed based on several criteria (including [sub-regional representation and balance of the delegation](#)). Regional delegates' ratings are carefully considered for applicants from their respective regions;
4. Telephone interviews are conducted with 2 to 4 short-listed candidates for each regional opening, inviting other members of civil society (not on the current NGO Delegation) to participate in the interview;
5. Once a selection is made, successful applicants are notified via email;
6. Applicant confirms his/her availability, accepts the appointment, and becomes an incoming Delegate; and
7. As the ECOSOC resolution requires, incoming NGOs are submitted and formally approved pro forma by the PCB at its next meeting in June or December. [Requirements and requests of the incoming delegates](#) may be made before this formal approval.

L. Regional representation and balance considerations:

As representatives of civil society, one of the great challenges of the delegation is to effect changes and improvements to the policies and programs of UNAIDS to meet the needs of the people they represent. However, it is unrealistic to expect that any ten individuals can fully represent the full range of civil society involved in HIV work worldwide or that any two delegates can fully represent their entire region. The Delegation, however, must try to do so to the best of its ability.

While there may be several applicants who meet the qualifications and requirements to serve as a Delegate, in the effort to compose the best representation, the delegation must factor in some other representational and balance considerations before making their selections from among the qualified applicants:

1. Sub-regional representation

Within regions, and even within some sub-regions, there is a great diversity of civil society involved in HIV work in terms of language, culture, and needs. The Delegation makes every effort to ensure that, *whenever possible*, unless no acceptable candidate is nominated during recruitment, the Main and alternate delegates from the same region meet sub-regional representational balance considerations:

- **Africa:** One Anglophone Delegate and one Francophone Delegate and/or no two delegates from the same sub-region (Southern Africa, Northern Africa, West Africa, East Africa, Central Africa);
- **Asia and the Pacific:** No two delegates from the same sub-region (Indian sub-continent, Southeast Asia, East Asia, Middle East, Pacific Island countries and territories [PICTs]);
- **Europe:** No two delegates from the same sub-region (Western/Central Europe and Eastern Europe/Central Asia);
- **Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC):** One Latin/Central America Delegate and one Caribbean Delegate; and
- **North America:** No two delegates from the same country.

2. HIV status, gender, constituency and organization balance

Among the ten delegates, the delegation makes every effort to ensure that, unless impossible or not the best candidate is nominated during recruitment, the entire Delegation meets these overall representational balance considerations in priority order:

- **PLHIV:** In support of the 1994 Paris Declaration and the greater (and meaningful) involvement of people living with HIV/AIDS (GIPA) principle, preference is given to qualified openly declared PLHIV applicants. As a rule, there should be a minimum of 3 PLHIV delegates;
- **Constituency:** A balance among delegates who possess the expertise to represent and advocate for specific key constituencies, including gay men and men who have sex with men (MSM), transgender and non-binary people, people who use drugs, sex workers, women, and young people;
- **Gender:** A balance of male and female delegates is also taken into account, including gender non-conforming/non-binary people; and
- **Organizations:** A balance among the delegates' organization types: networks of PLHIV and PLHIV organizations, key population networks (global or regional), community-based organizations, human rights organizations, and AIDS service organizations, among others. Preference will be given to PLHIV and key population networks.

M. Financial support:

1. Unpaid appointment:

There is no payment for participating as a delegate.

2. Support to attend key meetings

Although there is no payment for participation, the costs for delegates and, when invited, incoming delegates to attend key meetings—specifically PCB meetings (including delegation pre-meeting and debriefing meetings) and delegation orientations—are covered as follows:

- **Airfare:** UNAIDS Secretariat facilitates the flight bookings of NGO delegates using the most direct economy flight from their airport of origin to Geneva. Delegates who wish to undertake their own flight reservations and subsequent bookings can do so after receiving a travel authorization (TA) from the Secretariat. Any necessary visas are the responsibility of the delegate; and
- **Per diem/daily subsistence allowance:** Delegates are provided by UNAIDS—either in advance of travel date or soon after arrival—with a daily subsistence allowance following the WHO rate to adequately cover the cost of meals and hotel accommodation (lodging) for an approved number of meeting days. Delegates are responsible for the booking of their hotel.

3. Support to attend other meetings

If delegates are invited and available to attend other meetings (as outlined in [Commitments of the applying Delegate](#)), the costs to attend are covered as outlined in [2](#).

N. Early termination of a delegate's term:

The Delegation may terminate an NGO's and/or a delegate's term early if:

- The qualifications of the NGO or the delegate as outlined above have been misrepresented;
- The delegation determines that the commitments of the NGO or the delegate—as outlined above and as tracked by the delegation's Accountability Mechanism—are not being adequately kept; or
- A conflict of interest (as spelled out in the NGO Delegation's [Vision, Mission and Guiding Principles](#) and its [Code of Conduct](#)) is evidenced or declared on the part of the NGO or the delegate;
- The NGO ceases its principal involvement in HIV work or it ceases to exist; or
- The Delegate ceases their association with the NGO. Another qualified representative of the NGO may be presented and, if approved by the delegation, serve as a delegate for the remainder of the term of office; or
- The delegate does not fulfill the requirements of commitments established by the delegation.