



**NGO
DELEGATION TO THE
UNAIDS PCB**

55th PCB Meeting

PCB Summary Bulletin

10 until 12 December 2024

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Introduction

Midnight Poonkasetwattana | Asia and the Pacific Delegate

Kenya, as Chair, hosted the 55th UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) in Nairobi from 10 to 12 December 2024. This marked a historic moment: the first time in 18 years that the meeting has been held in Africa—last hosted by Lusaka in 2006—and the second time Kenya has hosted the PCB, following its 1997 event.

Africa, being the continent most affected by the HIV epidemic, served as a fitting stage for this pivotal gathering aimed at advancing global strategies in combating HIV/AIDS. Kenya also facilitated five field visits for PCB delegates on 9 December, offering direct exposure to the realities of the HIV epidemic and response efforts. These visits provided delegates with a deeper understanding of the Joint Programme's role, local challenges, and best practices shaping the global AIDS response.

The PCB meeting discussed a comprehensive agenda, including the NGO report *Breaking the Chains: Supporting Community Leadership and Human Rights for a Sustainable HIV Response*, a thematic segment on *Addressing Inequalities in Children and Adolescents to End AIDS by 2030*, updates on HIV in prisons and other closed settings, findings from the mid-term review of the *Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026*, and follow-up discussions on sustaining the gains of the global HIV response toward 2030 and beyond.

On the first day, 10 December, the UNAIDS Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima, delivered the Executive Director's presentation, which focused on the mid-term review of the *Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026*. Discussions highlighted the persistent funding gap and the challenges in achieving the global prevention target.

The second day, 11 December, featured the presentation of the NGO report, *Breaking the Chains: Supporting Community Leadership and Human Rights for a Sustainable HIV Response*. The report called on Member States and donors, including PEPFAR and the Global Fund, to increase financing for community-led organizations, prioritize human rights initiatives, and enhance accountability through disaggregated reporting on donor and government investments in these areas.

The third day, 12 December, was dedicated to the thematic segment, *Addressing Inequalities in Children and Adolescents to End AIDS by 2030*. Presentations and engaging panel discussions underscored the impact of inequities and poor outcomes on HIV prevention, treatment, and support services for children and adolescents. Delegates emphasized the urgency of addressing these barriers to progress in achieving the 2030 goal of ending AIDS among children and adolescents.

Report of the Executive Director

Martha Clara Nakato | Africa Delegate

On the opening day of the UNAIDS PCB, the Executive Director delivered a comprehensive [report](#) highlighting the critical juncture at which the global HIV response finds itself. She stressed that this is a race against time, requiring urgent action and intensified efforts to sustain progress and achieve the ambitious global HIV targets by 2030.

The report reflected on the findings of the mid-term review, reaffirming that the 95–95–95 targets for 2025 remain attainable—provided that Member States demonstrate renewed commitment and sustain investments in the HIV response. It underscored that HIV continues to be a complex development challenge, necessitating sustained financing and the rapid adoption of scientific breakthroughs, such as long-acting HIV medications, to revolutionize prevention and treatment approaches.

A key message from the report was a resolute call to action: history must not repeat itself. The following highlights stood out:

- Meeting the 95–95–95 targets by 2025 remains a formidable challenge.
- A widening funding gap of approximately \$9.5 billion threatens progress, particularly in regions such as Eastern Europe, Central Asia, the Middle East, and North Africa.
- Ensuring access to affordable, effective HIV medicines for all low- and middle-income countries remains an urgent priority.
- Achieving the goal of 95% access to combination prevention options by 2025 appears increasingly unlikely.
- UNAIDS faces a challenging financial outlook for 2025. However, proactive measures, including a High-Level Panel review of the Joint Programme’s operating model, aim to ensure it remains adaptable to future needs.
- Preparations for the next Global AIDS Strategy are already underway, providing a solid foundation for continued progress.

In summary, the Executive Director’s report called for collective reflection and decisive action by Member States, civil society, UN partners, and all key stakeholders. It urged leveraging this pivotal moment to capitalize on scientific advancements, secure necessary resources, and ensure no one is left behind in the quest to end AIDS by 2030.

Report by the NGO Representative

Cecilia Chung | North America Delegate

The [NGO Report](#), *Breaking the Chains: Supporting Community Leadership and Human Rights for a Sustainable HIV Response*, presented at the 54th PCB, emphasized the critical role of community leadership in the HIV response, as outlined in the [Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026](#), particularly in achieving the 30–80–60 targets. However, progress faces

significant threats, including shrinking civic space, backlash against gender equality, and inadequate funding. To address these challenges, the report calls for sustainable financing, prioritizing community leadership in AIDS strategies, and strengthening accountability frameworks.

The report underscores that community leadership is indispensable to ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Yet, it faces substantial obstacles such as restrictive civic environments, attacks from anti-gender and anti-rights movements, and chronic underfunding. It urges the UNAIDS PCB to take decisive action to enhance recognition and support for community leadership, safeguarding the gains made in the global HIV response while upholding human rights.

Despite the report's strong recommendations, three days of negotiations in the drafting room resulted in the exclusion of terms like "anti-gender" and "anti-rights" from the final decision points. However, Sonal Giani, the delegate from Asia, made a pivotal intervention on the final day, requesting that the Secretariat research and define these terms. This initiative aims to enable their eventual incorporation into official UN language, paving the way for stronger recognition and action in future discussions.

Leadership in the AIDS response

[Gastón Devisich | Latin America and the Caribbean Delegate](#)

The 55th PCB Meeting marked a departure from previous iterations by featuring a [panel](#) of five speakers rather than a single individual addressing the agenda item. The panel focused on the accessibility of game-changing medicines and new technologies, fostering a dynamic and inclusive discussion.

The dialogue underscored the urgent need to transform scientific breakthroughs into accessible tools. Long-acting antiretrovirals (ARVs), while holding the potential to revolutionize HIV prevention and care, remain largely out of reach for many communities three years after their debut. This limited availability highlights systemic barriers. Without affordability and equitable distribution, these innovations risk being confined to proof-of-concept status, leaving vulnerable populations behind.

The Board emphasized that for people living with, vulnerable to, and most at risk of HIV—particularly in marginalized and under-resourced settings—the promise of long-acting technologies is only meaningful if they are both accessible and affordable. However, achieving consensus on practical steps to realize this goal proved challenging. Member States struggled to find common ground on interpreting and implementing intellectual property rights to align with local public health needs.

The NGO Delegation and Observing NGOs further highlighted persistent barriers, including market exclusivity, the lack of generics, and logistical challenges that disproportionately

affect low- and middle-income countries. Communities at the forefront of the epidemic, including key and priority populations, stressed that these life-saving tools must reach them through equitable public health systems and community-driven solutions. Without such efforts, the transformative potential of long-acting ARVs and other innovations risks being unrealized for those who need them most.

Follow-up to the thematic segment from the 54th Programme Coordinating Board meeting

Fionnuala Murphy | Europe Delegate

Ahead of the thematic meeting on Sustainability, the NGO Delegation convened a Civil Society Advisory Group with 25 organizations working at national, regional, and global levels. Together, we set priorities to guide the delegation's engagement, starting with reviewing the background note and selecting speakers.

Our first priority was to position progress on punitive legal environments, stigma, discrimination, and gender inequality as essential to sustainability. We emphasized these in the background note review and nominated Edwin Bernard (HIV Justice Network) and Ganna Dovbakh (Eurasian Harm Reduction Association) as speakers. They urged governments to repeal laws undermining sustainable HIV responses and resist anti-rights movements. These themes shaped our advocacy and NGO report.

Our second priority focused on financing for community-led responses. We called on UNAIDS and Member States to prioritize funding for communities in sustainability planning and decision points. During the thematic meeting, Keren Dunaway (International Community of Women Living with HIV) highlighted the essential role of women-led and youth-led organizations, advocating for long-term, sustainable funding. Field visits to community-led organizations in Nairobi reinforced this call, with Fionnuala Murphy from the NGO Delegation emphasizing the significant impact of underpaid peer workers at the Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Project.

Our final priority was to address risks posed by integrating HIV responses into broader health systems. Florence Riako-Anam (GNP+) stressed that sustainability must not come at the expense of service quality. Cindy Kelemi (BONELA) shared Botswana's challenges with integration into ailing systems, urging governments to safeguard high-quality HIV services for key populations.

In the decision point negotiations, we advocated for explicit references to decriminalization, human rights, stigma, gender equality, and community financing. While references to decriminalization and other human rights language were watered down, we secured a critical decision point urging Member States to "ensure enabling policies and legal environments that support equitable, accessible, affordable, and high-quality HIV services that leave no one

behind.” This was complemented by stronger decisions on human rights and gender equality for the NGO Report.

We also supported Brazil’s proposal on equitable access to innovative health technologies, emphasizing intellectual property rules that promote public health and access to essential tools. This decision is key ahead of the planned thematic meeting on long-acting antiretrovirals in December 2025. However, we reiterated that biomedical innovations alone cannot ensure sustainability without addressing human rights and decriminalization.

The thematic meeting underscored the urgent need for civil society engagement in developing national sustainability roadmaps. A PCB decision point urged Member States to “advance, in collaboration with communities, the development of country-owned HIV response sustainability roadmaps,” highlighting the central role of communities in driving sustainable responses.

Findings of the mid-term review of the Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026

[Xavier Biggs | Latin America and the Caribbean Delegate](#)

The Midterm Evaluation Report (MTR) for the Global AIDS Strategy 2021-2026 was presented during the 55th PCB meetings. This strategy has steered the global HIV response with its bold vision of ending the inequalities that fuel the AIDS pandemic.

The report highlighted two significant achievements:

- “Under the current Strategy, fewer people acquired HIV in 2023 than at any point since the late 1980s.”
- “Almost 31 million people were receiving lifesaving antiretroviral therapy, reducing AIDS-related deaths to their lowest level since the peak in 2004.”

However, the report also acknowledged critical challenges:

- “Despite this progress, the world is not on track to meet the 2025 targets set out in the Strategy.”
- “Uneven progress, deeply entrenched inequalities, insufficient prevention programming, a failure to raise up and support the work of communities, hurdles to accessing treatment, and a lack of political will and financial support threaten the response.”

These findings raised significant concerns for the NGO Delegation and the Board as a whole, prompting discussions on necessary interventions to address these gaps. The NGO Delegation reminded the Board of proven strategies, stating:

“We know what works: scale up HIV testing, expand equitable treatment, invest in new technologies, foster adherence strategies, and combat HIV stigma and discrimination. We must also offer Comprehensive Sexuality Education, SRHR services, protect the human rights of key and priority populations, and fully support community-based and community-led organizations.”

A particular focus was placed on Paragraph 61 of the report, which underscores the critical role of community-led organizations:

“It is essential that community-led organizations have the civic space and the legal and regulatory environments that permit them to receive funding and operate, as well as functional links with public health and wider government systems. These conditions are lacking in many countries.”

Given these challenges and the urgency to end AIDS as a public health threat, the next Global AIDS Strategy (2026–2031) will be pivotal in the four-decade-long global HIV response.

As a way forward, through decision points, the Executive Director is tasked to:

- Present an outline of the Global AIDS Strategy 2026–2031 for consideration by the PCB in June 2025.
- Present the one-year transitional UBRAF Workplan and Budget for 2026.
- Establish a working group for developing the next UBRAF, operational by September 2025.
- Advance High-Level Panel recommendations to ensure UNAIDS is resilient and fit for purpose.

The report’s findings serve as both a warning and a call to action, underscoring the importance of sustained commitment, bold policies, and increased support for communities to achieve the vision of ending AIDS by 2030.

Update on HIV in prisons and other closed settings

Alexei Lakhov | Europe Delegate

At its 55th meeting, the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) reviewed progress on addressing HIV in prisons and other closed settings under [Agenda Item 5](#). The PCB adopted decision points emphasizing the following priorities:

- **Recognizing Disparities:** Acknowledging the disproportionate burden of HIV and related diseases, such as tuberculosis and hepatitis, in prisons, where preventive, diagnostic, and treatment services are often inadequate.
- **Expanding Evidence-Based Interventions:** Advocating for comprehensive, evidence-informed, and gender-responsive approaches to improve HIV prevention, treatment, and care in prisons.

- **Fostering Collaboration:** Urging member states, civil society, and international partners to integrate prison health programs into national public health strategies, ensuring cross-sectoral coordination to address systemic barriers.
- **Advancing Human Rights:** Calling for legal reforms to reduce the criminalization of key populations and improve prison conditions to uphold dignity and equity for all.

During drafting discussions, a specific decision point was proposed: “Report to the Programme Coordinating Board, if appropriate, through the annual UBRAF performance reporting, on progress related to HIV among people in prisons and other closed settings.” This phrasing raised concerns within the NGO Delegation, as the inclusion of “if appropriate” and reference to UBRAF alone might limit broader reporting avenues. However, the Secretariat clarified that the Bureau could still consider a separate Thematic Segment or report on “HIV in Prisons and Other Closed Settings” if requested by the NGO Delegation or a Member State.

Evaluation report and management response

[Sonal Giani | Asia and the Pacific Delegate](#)

The [Evaluation Report](#) and [Management Response](#) presented at the 55th UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) meeting highlighted progress in implementing the 2024–2025 Evaluation Plan and outlined key challenges and recommendations for sustaining the global HIV response. The three evaluations—focused on the Independent Joint Evaluation of the Global Action Plan (SDG3 GAP), the Midterm Evaluation of the UNAIDS–CDC Cooperative Agreement, and the Review of Joint Programme Evaluations—acknowledged achievements in partnership-building and strengthening strategic information. However, they also identified persistent challenges, including insufficient inter-agency coherence, funding gaps for community-led responses, and accountability issues.

The evaluations emphasized that community-led responses remain underfunded and are constrained by shrinking civic spaces, with over 60% of countries imposing restrictions on civil society. These barriers directly hinder access to life-saving HIV services for key populations, including LGBTQI+ individuals, sex workers, people who use drugs, and young people. In response, the NGO Delegation highlighted the urgent need to protect civic spaces, remove legal barriers, and prioritize funding for community-led initiatives that address stigma, discrimination, and gaps in service delivery.

While progress was noted in partnerships and data use, the evaluations also revealed inefficiencies in fund disbursement and weak accountability systems. In its management response, UNAIDS pledged to enhance coordination, align resources, and focus on community-led initiatives, recognizing their crucial role in combating stigma and discrimination.

Civil society representatives called for urgent action from UNAIDS and Member States to repeal punitive laws, secure sustainable funding for grassroots organizations, and strengthen mechanisms that place communities at the heart of decision-making. Community-led responses were reaffirmed as essential for achieving UNAIDS' 10-10-10 targets and ensuring no one is left behind.

Next PCB Meetings

Shamin Mohamed Jr. | North America Delegate

The 56th PCB meeting will take place in Geneva, Switzerland. This agenda item finalized the themes for the 56th and 57th PCB meetings in 2025. The June 2025 meeting will focus on addressing health inequities through a sustained HIV response, human rights, and harm reduction for people who use drugs. Meanwhile, the December 2025 meeting will explore the potential of long-acting antiretrovirals (ARVs) to close HIV prevention and treatment gaps. These themes aim to tackle pressing issues in the global AIDS response, emphasizing actionable recommendations and strategies to improve health outcomes and equity for key populations.

The PCB Bureau, which includes two seats currently held by the NGO Delegation to ensure community representation, is responsible for overseeing the theme selection process. The NGO Delegation collaborated with the International Network of People who Use Drugs (INPUD) to propose the thematic segment on harm reduction, highlighting the urgent need to address the rights and health needs of people who use drugs.

I would also like to acknowledge the NGO Delegation's support for the thematic segment on long-acting ARVs. This focus will shine a critical spotlight on the disparities that must be addressed as these innovative treatments become more widely available, ensuring that they contribute meaningfully to closing gaps in HIV prevention and care.

Thematic Segment: Addressing inequalities in children and adolescents to end AIDS by 2030

Myles Mwansa | Africa Delegate

The 55th UNAIDS PCB thematic segment underscored the urgent need to address persistent disparities in access to HIV prevention, testing, treatment, and care among children and adolescents. Vulnerable populations, including young girls, children in conflict zones, and marginalized communities, remain disproportionately affected, making equity-focused solutions a priority for achieving the 2030 goal of ending AIDS.

Progress since the thematic segment was acknowledged, but participants stressed the need for accelerated action and accountability to ensure commitments lead to measurable outcomes. Without concrete efforts, these populations risk being left behind.

Community-led responses were emphasized as essential for reaching underserved populations. Grassroots organizations play a critical role in bridging gaps, and integrating their interventions into national strategies was recognized as vital to ensuring sustainability and impact.

Youth engagement and leadership also emerged as key priorities. Adolescents should be empowered as partners in the response, with increased investments in youth-led advocacy and initiatives that amplify their voices.

Participants called for holistic support systems that address intersectional needs such as mental health, education, and protection from violence. Multisectoral approaches are crucial to creating equitable and effective solutions.

The PCB was urged to prioritize funding for children and adolescents, ensure community involvement in decision-making, and adopt clear timelines and measurable indicators to track progress. Only through collective action, accountability, and equitable resource allocation can the global HIV response meet the needs of children and adolescents and achieve the goal of ending AIDS by 2030.

Reflections from incoming delegates

Amanita Calderon-Cifuentes | Incoming Europe Delegate

Walking into the PCB space for the first time was a bittersweet whirlwind—long, exhilarating hours of advocacy, networking, debates, and conversations with remarkable advocates, health experts, and policymakers that sparked both real hope and moments of disappointment. But these encounters stood alongside others that sharply revealed how deeply ingrained patriarchal and capitalistic frameworks are within UNAIDS. Honestly, entering this space was daunting, yet it also empowered me. When systems prioritize power and profit over human rights, it feels like a betrayal of the very values we are meant to uphold.

For me, it's precisely in those moments—when transphobia emerged within those walls—that my heart filled with a renewed sense of determination, passion, and love to stand firm for our communities. It's in those instances that I remind myself why I'm here: to build bridges, not burn them. Witnessing small but significant shifts and realizing that, together, we can drive change to improve the lives of people living with HIV and reduce the risks faced by trans communities and other key populations strengthens my resolve.

I am deeply honored to be part of this multi-layered, complex space and to walk this path hand in hand with people I proudly call "my personal heroes."

Jeremy Tan | Incoming Asia and the Pacific Delegate

The 55th UNAIDS PCB meeting in Nairobi was an eye-opening experience that reinforced my belief in the power of communities to lead the fight against HIV. I witnessed firsthand how community-led efforts are saving lives and addressing gaps left by national programs. Despite challenges such as shrinking advocacy spaces, movements against rights, and unstable funding, the resilience of the NGO delegation, young people, and key populations was striking. Their united voice reminded everyone that lasting change is built on

collaboration, human rights protection, and supporting those most affected. This meeting reaffirmed that by standing together and empowering communities, we can end AIDS by 2030.

Keren Dunaway | Incoming Latin America and the Caribbean Delegate

Participating in the UNAIDS PCB as the incoming delegate for Latin America and the Caribbean offered new insights and a deeper understanding of the work behind the scenes. Although I had attended PCB meetings before, this was my first opportunity to engage directly in the internal processes of the NGO Delegation. Witnessing the complexity of global decision-making—from drafting interventions to negotiating language for decision points—gave me a profound appreciation for the effort required to ensure that community voices, our voices, are effectively represented and the fight it takes to make that a reality.

As incoming delegates, we had to quickly adapt to the fast-paced dynamics of the PCB, balancing plenary participation with intensive internal coordination to align our positions. I also gained valuable insight into the strategic planning needed to amplify regional priorities, such as advocating for sustainable funding for community-led responses and addressing structural barriers like gender inequality and restrictions on civic space.

We are prepared as new representatives of the delegation to navigate these challenges through strategic operations, careful preparation, consensus-building, and constant collaboration. With diplomacy, teamwork, and persistence, we aim to influence outcomes effectively at this level. While significant work lies ahead, I am committed to building on this progress and contributing to a more inclusive and impactful HIV response that truly addresses the needs of Latin America and the Caribbean.

Todd Theringer | Incoming North America Delegate

I continue to be surprised by how many African NGOs face challenges similar to those of community-based organizations in the US, including a lack of necessary funding, stigma, and government inaction. Societal structures continue to enable HIV to thrive, which only increases the burden on NGOs, who are left to fight for diminishing resources and advocate for social justice. HIV advocates and those living with HIV are expected to constantly share their stories and volunteer indefinitely. What other virus exploits people on so many levels?

I've also never had to consider the Global North versus the Global South when it comes to access to medications. Finally, I hope that the presence of NGO representatives serves as a reminder to policymakers—moving their focus from just numbers to the real lives that are worth saving.

Ulrich Mvate | Incoming Africa Delegate

Joining the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board has been a profoundly rewarding experience, broadening my understanding of global health challenges and collaborative strategies. Initially, I navigated the complexities of the organization's mission to combat HIV and AIDS, gaining insight into the dynamic relationship between policy, funding, and on-the-ground initiatives. Engaging with representatives from diverse countries and sectors

expanded my perspective on the multifaceted approaches required to address public health issues. I was particularly moved by the passion and dedication of my colleagues, who are deeply committed to making a tangible impact in their communities. This role has not only deepened my appreciation for the importance of coordinated health efforts but has also inspired me to advocate more fervently for equitable access to health resources worldwide, with a particular focus on the African region. Overall, this journey has been one of learning, connection, and renewed motivation to contribute to this vital global cause.