



56th PCB Meeting

PCB Summary Bulletin

24 until 26 June 2025
Geneva, Switzerland

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Introduction

Amrita Sarkar | Asia and the Pacific Delegate

The 56th meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB), chaired by Brazil, was held in Geneva from 24 to 26 June 2025. Unlike previous sessions, this meeting took place at a critical juncture for UNAIDS and the global HIV response. With a packed agenda, the Board reviewed the annotated outline of the upcoming Global AIDS Strategy 2026–2031, discussed the revised Joint Programme Operating Model, and received a detailed update on the strategic human resources restructuring of the UNAIDS Secretariat. Given the weight of these issues, the third day—normally reserved for the thematic segment—was instead devoted to these governance matters, with the thematic segment postponed to 2026.

The NGO Delegation played a central role in the meeting, with six new members joining and actively participating across key agenda items. The Delegation held bilateral meetings with representatives from Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Finland, France, the Netherlands, the Philippines, Poland, the United Kingdom, and the United States, along with their respective constituencies. Additional strategic discussions took place with Cosponsors, the Chair, the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association (USSA), and civil society observers, deepening coordination and shared understanding.

Executive Director Winnie Byanyima opened the meeting with a stark message: UNAIDS faces the most serious crisis in its 30-year history. A 60% drop in projected income—largely due to the abrupt reduction in U.S. funding—has triggered major restructuring across the Secretariat, including a 55% staff cut and a consolidation of UNAIDS presence in priority countries. These institutional changes are unfolding alongside the development of a new Global AIDS Strategy, deepening human rights challenges, and growing threats to civil society space and gender equality globally.

This meeting underscored the urgent need for a well-resourced, rights-based, community-led HIV response. Amid shrinking donor support and rising anti-rights movements, the work of UNAIDS and its partners remains essential. The Board's discussions reflected a shared recognition that adaptation is necessary—but the commitment to ending AIDS must remain uncompromising.

Report of the Executive Director

Keren Dunaway | Latin America and the Caribbean Delegate

In a time of uncertainty and crisis, the report delivered by the Executive Director at the 55th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board prompted reflection on the direction of the global HIV response. It outlined the financial pressures now threatening the stability of

UNAIDS, alongside the broader impact of geopolitical shifts, weakening international cooperation, and growing barriers to access in many countries.

The proposed structural changes across the Joint Programme—including significant staff reductions, a narrower country focus, and adjustments to core functions—represent a fundamental rethinking of how UNAIDS operates. While adaptation is necessary, it is vital to consider how these changes will affect the people and communities most impacted by HIV. In Latin America and the Caribbean, where the response remains uneven and many countries continue to rely on external support—particularly for community-led prevention initiatives—there is a real risk that these shifts will further distance institutional decisions from lived realities.

The Secretariat has presented a plan to work more closely with national governments and to prioritize countries with the highest burdens. However, this approach assumes that governments are both equipped and willing to fully lead, and that existing gaps in equity, participation, and rights protections can be addressed within current political constraints. Many of the strategies outlined will remain out of reach without stable support and a deeper commitment to shared responsibility.

Community-led efforts have long filled the gaps left by underfunded systems, weak political will, or policy delays. These efforts must not be taken for granted. If UNAIDS is to move forward with fewer resources and a reduced footprint, it must intentionally create space for those already doing the work—especially women, young people, and key populations in under-resourced settings—to shape priorities, access funding, and sustain the response in practical terms.

This report comes at a time when political decisions have real consequences for health, dignity, and survival. The path forward is not only about streamlining institutions; it is also about confronting the choices being made in a world where inequality is deepening and accountability is too often delayed. For those of us in regions where the HIV response is inseparable from questions of justice and access, the task now is to defend what has been built and insist on a response that reflects both the urgency of the moment and the needs of the people most affected.

Report of the Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations

Amanita Calderón-Cifuentes | Europe Delegate

The discussion on the cosponsoring model during the 56th PCB meeting offered a timely and important opportunity to reflect on the future of the Joint Programme in the context of ongoing restructuring and the development of the next Global AIDS Strategy. While civil

society welcomed the reaffirmation of commitments to human rights, community leadership, and the multisectoral nature of the response, several areas were flagged for further dialogue and clarity.

A key concern raised—both in plenary and in the drafting room—was the lack of transparency regarding how cosponsors will be designated as lead or affiliate under the revised operating model. Delegates called for a clear, consultative process that meaningfully includes agencies with strong mandates to serve key populations. This is particularly urgent in political environments where rights-based programming is most needed but often underfunded or deprioritised.

Delegates also stressed the need to articulate a coherent vision for collective responsibility. Without robust accountability mechanisms and performance indicators tied to the needs of key populations, there is a real risk of fragmentation, diminished impact, and the erosion of hard-won progress. The current moment, therefore, must be seen as an opportunity to reassess how cosponsors can be best positioned to deliver an inclusive and effective HIV response—especially in legally or politically restrictive settings.

The final decisions adopted under Agenda Item 6 now endorse the revised Joint Programme operating model (Decision Point 8.4) and commit to a review process (Decision Point 8.6), yet they leave essential questions unanswered about the roles of individual cosponsors and their accountability to the communities they aim to serve.

As we move toward implementation, civil society urges that communities be consulted in shaping a cosponsor model that is fit for purpose—rooted in lived realities, guided by shared responsibility, and equipped to uphold the bold commitments required to end HIV/AIDS.

Follow-up to the thematic segment from the 55th Programme Coordinating Board meeting

Martha Clara Nakato | Africa Delegate

The follow-up to the thematic segment from the 55th PCB meeting focused on accelerating action to address persistent inequalities affecting children and adolescents in the HIV response. It notably acknowledged troubling gaps: in 2023, there were 120,000 new HIV infections among children, and 600,000 children under 14 living with HIV are still not receiving treatment.

Working alongside allies like the European and Africa blocs, and Cosponsors, we defended inclusive, rights-based commitments in a highly politicized and challenging drafting environment. Long hours of negotiation were required to protect key language and secure

progressive outcomes. Despite these challenges, we registered three major wins in the Decision Points (DPs).

- a) We ensured key populations and their children are explicitly named in every DP. Inclusive language matters—this is visibility, recognition, and a commitment to leave no one behind, and it ensures their continued visibility in HIV data, programming, and policy.
- b) Community Leadership and Resourcing Affirmed; the Decision Points underscore the role of youth-led, key population-led, and community-based organizations in HIV service delivery and accountability. They also call for meaningful participation in programming and financing decisions—and reinforce the need for sustainable, long-term investment in community-led responses.
- c) The DPs reaffirm the need to remove legal and policy barriers that block access to HIV services, and to provide age-appropriate, culturally relevant comprehensive sexuality education (CSE) and SRHR services for adolescents. These are essential for HIV prevention, empowerment, and justice.

However, these gains were not without backlash. Iran disassociated as expected, but the United States' withdrawal shocked many—citing that CSE “does not align with family values.” This retreat by a traditional human rights ally signals rising anti-rights and anti-gender pushback, and reinforces the urgent need for a united and sustained civil society advocacy.

Unified Budget, Results and Accountability

Framework (UBRAF) 2022-2026

Xavier Biggs | Latin America and the Caribbean Delegate

The [UBRAF](#) highlights steady progress toward ending AIDS as a public health threat. From 2010 to 2023, new HIV infections declined by 39%, and AIDS-related deaths fell by 51%. By the end of 2023, 77% of adults living with HIV were on treatment. These achievements were made despite major geopolitical, financial, and public health challenges—proof of what is possible when investments are made wisely and equitably.

But the HIV response is not on track. AIDS remains a global health and development challenge. In over 20 countries across three regions, new HIV infections are rising. In 2023, for the first time, more new infections occurred outside sub-Saharan Africa than within it. This uneven progress underscores why UNAIDS remains essential. The success we celebrate today was built through years of advocacy, partnership, and a commitment to community-led and rights-based responses. UNAIDS has not only convened this work but served as a bold, principled broker for change.

The NGO Delegation used the [UBRAF agenda item](#) to emphasize that indicators represent people—not just numbers. Behind each statistic is someone now on life-saving treatment, or someone who avoided HIV because prevention reached them in time.

But numbers alone don't tell the full story. We must ask: What have these resources made possible—and what is now at risk? During the 55th PCB in Nairobi, we visited community-led programmes and saw first-hand what is made possible when investments are meaningful. These programmes are often the only lifeline for key populations, and they demonstrate the tangible impact of UNAIDS' support. Without sustained investment, the progress they represent—and the people they serve—are at serious risk.

UBRAF also provided a sobering picture of UNAIDS' financial strain. The Programme faces a sharp budget cut—from \$150 million in 2024 to a projected maximum of \$68 million in 2025—along with a 55% reduction in staff. These cuts will have a direct impact on the Joint Programme's ability to deliver. Donor countries are being urged to help fill the gap and, where possible, make longer-term financial commitments to enable more strategic planning. We welcome the transparency of the [financial report](#)—but we need more than numbers. We need clarity on how resources are driving impact, who is responsible, what each co-sponsor contributes, and how efforts are coordinated.

Communities have not stepped back—we are still here, still reaching those no one else does. But we need trust, funding, and inclusion. This is not just about balancing books. It is about keeping the HIV response rooted in people, equity, and shared responsibility.

Annotated outline of the next Global AIDS Strategy 2026- 2031

[Shamin Mohamed Jr. | North America Delegate](#)

The Board reviewed the annotated outline of the next Global AIDS Strategy, which will guide the HIV response from 2026 to 2031. With five years remaining to reach the goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat, the outline proposes a Strategy built around three core priorities: sustaining the response, advancing equity and access, and powering community leadership. The Strategy also outlines eight results areas, including sustainable financing, increased domestic funding, better integration with other sectors, improved data systems, and ending stigma and discrimination.

The PCB requested that UNAIDS finalize the Strategy through an inclusive, evidence-based consultation process. The final draft will be presented in December 2025 and is expected to reflect scientific evidence, inputs from this meeting, and the realities of the current global

context, including rising stigma, shrinking civic space, and ongoing setbacks to gender equality and human rights.

In our statement, the NGO Delegation expressed broad support for the overall direction of the Strategy. But we also raised concerns regarding the language on key populations, gender equality, and sexual and reproductive health, which is weaker than in previous frameworks. We are concerned that the progress made may slip back without clear and transparent commitments.

Therefore, the NGO delegation emphasized the necessity of funding models that are immune to political changes and support concrete targets and long-term investment in communities and community responses. Additionally, we highlighted the importance of youth living with HIV being meaningfully included in the Strategy. Finally, we explained that the “integration” of different services must be better explained, well-defined, and translated into real, coordinated action across housing, education, employment, and health systems.

The NGO Delegation’s final message was that sustainability is not just about money. It is also about promoting rights, building political will, and keeping communities at the center of the HIV response.

Report on the recommendations for revisions to the Joint Programme Operating Model

Fionnuala Murphy | Europe Delegate

This item follows a [report](#) by the High-level panel on a resilient and fit-for-purpose UNAIDS Joint Programme in the context of the sustainability of the HIV response, which recommended significant revisions to UNAIDS’ operating model, including the downsizing of the UNAIDS secretariat and the Joint Programme as a whole. Over recent months, that process has been expedited following US funding cuts, and UNAIDS is currently undergoing a restructure that will see it lose 55% of its staff and close 31 country offices. The number of cosponsoring agencies is also being reduced to five or six lead cosponsors, with others contributing in a more ad hoc way. Worryingly, the funding crisis facing UNAIDS has led to major cuts in cosponsors’ funding, which will reduce their ability to step up in contexts where UNAIDS no longer has a presence.

As communities and civil society, we need to be proactive in ensuring that key gaps in leadership for ending AIDS are filled. Interestingly, the High-Level Panel proposed an enhanced role for communities and civil society within the Joint Programme, including as members of new Joint Teams on AIDS. This is a key area for follow up by the NGO delegation. The Panel also recommended focusing UNAIDS’ role on four core functions: leadership, convening, accountability, and community engagement. The NGO delegation was concerned

that rights and inequalities were not explicitly included, as our recent survey showed that these are the functions that communities and civil society most value from UNAIDS. Raising our concerns, we secured a board decision, ‘requesting that actions to address inequalities are integrated across these four priorities’, and received assurances from UNAIDS Executive Director Winnie Byanyima that human rights remains a core part of UNAIDS’ mandate, with decisions regarding staffing to reflect this.

Finally, the High-Level Panel proposed that the Joint Programme ‘sunset’ in 2030, and ahead of the PCB, some suggested that this timeline might be moved forward, given financial difficulties facing UNAIDS and the [UN80 process](#), which will propose that some UN agencies merge. [Intervening](#), our delegation warned PCB members against disbanding UNAIDS at this point, when all that we’ve worked for is in danger. We urged a focus on showing why UNAIDS is still needed, particularly in the UN80 discussions, as well as finding ways to fund the vital work that faces UNAIDS – and all of us – in the next five years.

Update on strategic human resources management issues

Ulrich Mvate | Africa Delegate

The Secretariat presented its annual [update on strategic human resources management](#), grounded in the 2023–2026 People Management Strategy. The update showcased progress across five guiding principles: investing in learning and development; promoting gender equality, diversity, equity, inclusion, and antiracism; embracing new ways of working; upholding respectful conduct and zero tolerance for misconduct; and prioritizing staff well-being and engagement.

However, this year’s report came at a moment of exceptional challenge. In early 2025, UNAIDS faced a 60% cut to its expected income, including a major reduction in funding from the United States Government. In response, the Secretariat launched a large-scale restructuring process, involving a more than 50% reduction in staffing and a shift to a smaller, regionally focused footprint. The Secretariat will now center its work on four core functions: leadership, coordination, accountability, and community engagement. These changes, aligned with broader UN reform efforts, mark one of the most significant institutional transformations in UNAIDS’s history.

In addition to detailing the implementation of the People Strategy, the report provided insights into staff composition, diversity, performance management, learning programmes, disciplinary actions, and wellness initiatives. The Secretariat emphasized that “people are the most valuable asset” of UNAIDS, and efforts are underway to support staff through this period of profound transition—including counselling, leadership development, and career realignment support.

Given the scale and impact of these developments, PCB members, including the NGO Delegation, proposed and approved additional decision points. These call on the Executive Director to:

- Provide an update at the 57th PCB in December 2025 on the restructuring process and its impact on staff,
- Ensure that the implementation of the revised operating model is conducted in a transparent, inclusive, and fair manner,
- Present at the 58th PCB in June 2026 a detailed overview of the criteria and methodology used for staff reductions, including disaggregated data by region, function, staff level, and gender.

As UNAIDS navigates this critical juncture, the Board's discussion underscored the urgent need to protect staff well-being, preserve institutional knowledge, and ensure the Secretariat remains fit for purpose to deliver on its mandate in the evolving global HIV response.

Statement by the representative of the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association (USSA)

[Jeremy Tan | Asia and the Pacific Delegate](#)

The NGO Delegation delivered an intervention in response to the [statement](#) presented by Mr. Alankar Malviya, the chairperson of the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association (USSA).

Alankar presented a strong and heartfelt message that highlighted the serious impact of ongoing restructuring on UNAIDS staff. The statement raised concerns about increased workloads, burnout, lack of transparency, and limited consultation with staff throughout the process. It also reflected the frustration felt by many due to the absence of clear communication and the emotional toll of repeated restructuring. Despite these challenges, the Staff Association reaffirmed the commitment of staff to the HIV response and called for a process that centers transparency, fairness, and well-being. Key recommendations included strengthening resource mobilization, providing support for staff mental health, and ensuring meaningful staff engagement.

The NGO Delegation expressed deep appreciation and solidarity with the staff. The [intervention](#) emphasized that UNAIDS staff are not only the backbone of the institution but have also worked closely with communities over the years. Their contributions are essential to achieving the goals of the Joint Programme, and their well-being must be recognized as a priority.

To close the intervention, the NGO Delegation delivered a message of solidarity, stating clearly that staff voices are heard, seen, and supported. The room was then invited to join in a round of applause to honour all UNAIDS and Joint Programme staff, including those continuing their service and those who are leaving. This gesture served as a collective moment of respect and recognition.

Following the agenda item, the Board adopted a decision that acknowledged the concerns raised in the USSA statement and invited the Staff Association to return with an updated statement at the 57th PCB. This decision point was proposed by the NGO Delegation, recognizing that the USSA had not yet had sufficient time to reflect on the impact of the restructuring process on staff.

57th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board

Todd Theringer | North America Delegate

The NGO Delegation thanked Brazil for its generous offer to host the 57th PCB Meeting in Brasília and expressed our strong expectation that field visits to community-led HIV programmes be included in the agenda. These visits are essential—they remind us that behind the data and decisions are real people, communities, and lives at stake.

Hosting PCB meetings outside Geneva, as seen in Nairobi and Chiang Mai, brings the Board closer to the realities of the HIV response. It allows delegates to witness programmes firsthand, enhances local political engagement, and creates space for regional stakeholders and key populations to meaningfully participate.

In the face of UNAIDS' ongoing funding crisis, this move is also financially strategic. While the total cost of a meeting in Brasília is higher, the Government of Brazil has committed to covering the additional expenses. This means that UNAIDS will contribute only US\$131,700, compared to US\$195,000 if the meeting were held in Geneva—a savings of over US\$63,000.

Brazil's offer to host the meeting is a helpful example of cost-sharing, especially at a time when UNAIDS is facing serious financial constraints. The savings to the Secretariat show that it's possible to support broader participation while also being mindful of the budget.

We cannot give up on the work because the data shows us that UNAIDS is needed and must continue to mobilize resources—and the world—to keep fighting HIV.