

UNAIDS/PCB(25)/09.24
23 October 2009

25th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board
Geneva, Switzerland
8-10 December 2009

**Increased involvement of civil society in the
Programme Coordinating Board**

Additional documents for this item: *none*

Action required at this meeting: *none*

Cost implications for decisions: *none*

INTRODUCTION

1. At its 23rd meeting in December 2008 the Programme Coordinating Board considered a paper¹ from the PCB NGOs that contained the results of consultations with a broad range of civil society representatives on how the NGOs could improve their involvement in the Board. The paper also contained a number of recommendations - some of which were adopted and some of which (three) were subject to the following decision point:

“7.9 - Requests the UNAIDS Secretariat to prepare a paper for the 25th Programme Coordinating Board meeting that responds to the management and cost implications of the proposed recommendations presented in the PCB NGO’s paper to the 23rd Board meeting on “Increased involvement of civil society in the PCB”, and taking into account the recommendations of the Second Independent Evaluation;”

2. The following three decision points are found to be subject to decision point 7.9 above:
 - a. *(1.iii.) Recommends that the UNAIDS Secretariat ensure that country offices and Regional Support Teams identify ways to provide resources to Member States that are not able to fund civil society participation in their Delegations;*
 - b. *(3.i.) Requests the UNAIDS RSTs to allocate adequate opportunities and resources to ensure civil society engagement at the regional level. This should include the participation of regional NGO Delegates in relevant parts of Regional Management Meetings and the provision of other opportunities to strategize with UNAIDS and Co-Sponsor contacts in their region; and*
 - c. *(3.ii.) Calls upon the UNAIDS Secretariat to enable the Regional Support Teams to make a financial contribution towards, and fully engage with, an annual ‘NGO caucus’ in each of the 5 regions represented by the NGO Delegation. These will be co-hosted by the Regional Support Team, regional NGO Delegates and the NGO Delegation’s Communications Facility. They will aim to both update constituencies on PCB processes and agenda items, and to solicit input on priority issues and needs of civil society, including people living with HIV and marginalized communities.*
3. The purpose of this document is to provide the requested management and cost implications of the three draft decision points above and, in doing so, to inform the discussions of the Programme Coordinating Board around the chapter of the Second Independent Evaluation on “How UNAIDS is fulfilling its mandate”, as this will be the section dealing with issues around civil society.

Decision point (a): Support to civil society participation in national delegations

4. Currently UNAIDS funds 13 Board members to attend Programme Coordinating Board meetings at an average cost of US\$ 6,300 per delegate, per meeting. This funding is given on the basis of the annex to ECOSOC resolution 1995/2 which

¹ UNAIDS/PCB(23)/08.29

states that “*funding would be made available for the representatives of developing countries... to cover the costs of one representative each to attend Board meetings*”. Member States determine for themselves who the funded delegate should be and there is no impediment to this delegate being from civil society.

If the intention of the draft recommendation is to provide funding to civil society observer delegates outside national delegations this would require the creation of a mechanism to determine who is funded and on what basis. The feasibility of resource mobilization would also need to be considered using the above estimate of US\$ 6,300 per delegate, per Programme Coordinating Board meeting.

Decision point (b): Engagement of civil society at the regional level

5. Under the current structure there is a difference between the geographical representation of the PCB NGOs (5 regions are represented) and the locations of the UNAIDS Secretariat Regional Support Teams (RST) (7 in total). The UNAIDS Regional Management Meetings (RMM) are consultative mechanisms organised by the RSTs and aim primarily to address internal management and human resource issues, although programmatic issues are also covered in the agenda.
6. All the RSTs report regular civil society engagement in their programmatic work. The UNAIDS Secretariat has developed various documents that include guidance for its staff on how to engage with civil society. Some of the RSTs also state that civil society participants, which include PCB NGOs in some cases, have occasionally participated in relevant parts of the RMM. Civil society participants can thus influence the RST strategic planning process and work plan development. Most RSTs have stressed that the involvement of civil society in the RMMs led to participation in sessions where programmatic issues were discussed, while discussions on staffing and management issues have been limited to the UNAIDS staff, except the Asia Pacific RST, where civil society participated throughout the entire RMM. It is to be noted that the costs of civil society participation in the RMM are completely borne by the RSTs and that, in at least one region (Latin America) the RST has on some occasions supported the translation of PCB-related documents in order to facilitate their dissemination and raise the awareness among civil society in the region.
7. In conclusion, the whole UNAIDS family is increasingly engaging with civil society at the regional level. So far, participation of PCB NGO regional delegates and other civil society in a RMM has been limited to certain regions and can occur during programmatic or strategic discussions of these meetings in all regions. Whenever it has happened, this contribution has been valued by UNAIDS and civil society participants and has contributed to an enhanced understanding of civil society issues within the RSTs.

Decision point (c): Support to regional “NGO caucuses”

8. The idea of regional caucuses was raised initially in the “*Review of NGO/Civil Society participation in the Programme Coordinating Board*” which was discussed at the 20th Board meeting, and then reconfirmed as having wide based support in the Focused Consultation carried out by the PCB NGO Communication Facility in 2008. The caucuses, which would be primarily an opportunity for civil society to work together, would include the participation of UNAIDS and have the two objectives of:

informing civil society constituents of what the Programme Coordinating Board is doing and the issues coming up on its agenda; and identifying priority issues from constituents that can be formulated into formal recommendations to the PCB NGOs and, in turn, raised in Board meetings. The caucuses will thus build upon civil society outreach that is already being done by the PCB NGO Communication Facility, and strengthen civil society engagement in the Board.

9. As recommended in the December 2008 PCB NGO paper on increasing civil society involvement in the Programme Coordinating Board, the caucuses would not be a stand alone event but an opportunity to engage civil society around a pre-existing meeting. The PCB NGOs also believe that sub-regional meetings would better take into account language, cultural and epidemic differences and thus maximize the depth of the interactions. In this line, the sub-regional civil society meetings that are organised by the RSTs constitute one attractive option.
10. Having informally consulted the PCB NGOs it is suggested that a maximum of 2 sub-regional/regional caucus meetings will be organized each year in rotating regions, the list being: North America, Caribbean, Latin America , Western and Eastern Europe , Middle East and North Africa, West and Central Africa, Eastern and Southern Africa, Asia and south Asia-Pacific. The chronological order for the meetings will be decided by the PCB NGOs with preference based on areas that need strengthened representation. It is further suggested that UNAIDS provide funding in the amount of USD 20,000 for each meeting to support logistical and travel costs.