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**20<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board**  
**Geneva, Switzerland**  
**25-27 June 2007**

*Provisional agenda item 5.1:*

**Results of the Geneva and field-based staff opinion survey and report on follow-up**

**Additional documents for this item:** none.

**Action required at this meeting - the Programme Coordinating Board is requested to:**

Take note of this document.

**Cost implications for decisions:** none

## **Staff Opinion Survey in the UNAIDS Secretariat**

1. For the second consecutive year, the UNAIDS Secretariat conducted a staff attitude survey, called the "Staff Opinion Survey". This practice is very common among employers in current times, as a means of obtaining honest feedback from staff about how they feel on a number of work-related, and office environment issues. It also provides valuable information to management, at all levels, so as to guide future steps for making improvements in the workplace, and for enhancing management methods and behaviours, communications, teamwork, morale and related areas.

2. The UNAIDS Staff Opinion Survey was conducted by an outside consulting firm, so as to ensure the independence of the survey, and to guarantee confidentiality and anonymity for responding staff. All staff at all levels, and of all contractual types, were asked to respond candidly to a series of questions that had been arrived at in consultation with the Staff Association and the UN Positive Staff Group. The questions, largely speaking, were very similar to the ones included the previous year, as a means to ensure continuity in the survey instrument and thus to be able to measure change, both positive and negative.

3. One survey was conducted for headquarters staff (December 2006 – January 2007) and a separate but very similar one for staff in the field (February – March 2007). The response rate was 63% at Headquarters (HQ) and 45% in the field (where internet connectivity issues continue to present some challenges).

4. The HQ results were disaggregated along departmental lines, and by sub-departments where the numbers were large enough to justify that. In the field the results were broken down by geographical region. In the HQ and field aggregate reports, breakdowns were also done by gender and type of contract. It is interesting to notice that the feedback received from female professional staff emerged as more positive than that from their male colleagues.

5. The levels of job satisfaction remain relatively high: 93% of field-based staff and 64% of HQ staff declare that they enjoy their work, with an increase of a few percentage points over the previous year in both cases. Nonetheless, a considerable number of staff are still reporting high levels of stress (35% in HQ and 29% in field positions - this marks an improvement for the former, but a 6% worsening for the latter). There are also problems in finding a work-family balance (33% in HQ and 42% in the field). Although our area of work touches upon sensitive issues, which can put our staff under considerable pressure, UNAIDS needs to pay further attention to this issue.

6. Working in UNAIDS is increasingly challenging. This is what 82% of HQ and 94% of field staff are saying. HQ staff now feel more accountable for the achievement of results (88% vs. 85% in 2006), while the results remain steady at field level (93%). In this framework, greater focus needs to be given regarding those colleagues who feel that their experience and competences are not fully used (25% in HQ and 19% in the field). It will be important to improve and maximize the use of staff resources, especially when the workload appears not to be evenly distributed in one third of the respondents - an area where there was good improvement at HQ, but worsened in the field.

7. Teamwork is crucial to UNAIDS. The largely positive feedback received about the cooperation between individuals with the rest of their team, therefore, is encouraging. Communication with supervisors emerges positively, while in the broader framework some work still needs to be done for those 25% of HQ and 16% of field staff who report that they cannot communicate freely with those above them. At corporate level, however, issues of internal communication and coordination within the Secretariat Headquarters appear problematic to many (63%), but this is the case for only 27% of field staff. Interestingly, 70% of HQ staff as compared to 24% of field staff believe that there is favouritism in UNAIDS – even though the exact meaning of this is unclear as the question was broadly formulated. The three issues will require adequate follow-up.

8. The last Staff Opinion Survey included a question to measure the satisfaction with the relatively recent policy of mobility and rotation. 76% of field staff support rotation and mobility of international staff, as compared to 53% of HQ staff. Negative comments are linked mainly to the impact on families, difficulty of matching skills with jobs in quite limited country offices, and specific implementation modalities. Senior management is committed to the continuation but improvement of this policy, in line with the approach of an increasing number of international organizations. The next survey will provide an opportunity to monitor staff opinion following a review of the policy and its implementing mechanisms.

9. The Executive Director has made available the full consolidated survey results to all staff. Some issues emerge as bottlenecks that call for more attention at the unit or team level. Others are institution-wide and must be tackled by senior management.

10. The Senior Management Team is following up on a few priority areas and will review on a quarterly basis the action plans of Departments and Regional Support Teams. Moreover, the Deputy Executive Director has conducted meetings with each unit to discuss unit level action plans. All survey results and unit action plans have been posted on the intranet to allow transparency and access to the same information for all staff. In the field, the Staff Opinion Survey is being put on the agenda of each Regional Management Meeting, for a full and open discussion.