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31 October 2007

21st Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board
Geneva, Switzerland
17–18 December 2007

Provisional agenda item 6:

Issues related to future Programme Coordinating Board meetings

Additional documents for this item: *none*

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

review the proposals in this paper and take decisions on the following points:

- a. objectives of PCB thematic segments;
- b. process for the identification of themes for PCB thematic segments;
- c. participants in PCB thematic segments;
- d. format of sessions for PCB thematic segments;
- e. venues (Geneva or outside Geneva) of future PCB meetings;
- f. criteria for the selection of venues for PCB meetings held outside Geneva; and
- g. organization of field visits for PCB delegates.

Cost implications for decisions:

decisions c to g carry financial implications as illustrated in the paper.

Background

1. This paper is in follow up to recommendations 10.b and 10.e adopted by the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) at its 20th meeting (Geneva, 25–27 June 2007).

Recommendations 10.b and 10.e of the 20th PCB meeting

10.b – (*the PCB*) Requests the UNAIDS Secretariat to elaborate a paper, for the next Programme Coordinating Board meeting, on the format and potential resource needs of the thematic segment, including the possibility of enabling the segment to become an effective venue for policy debate, engaging all relevant key players, including, occasionally, high level participation in a way that avoids duplication with existing high level events.

10.e – Before a final decision on modalities for meetings outside Geneva, the UNAIDS Secretariat is requested to provide a thorough analysis of holding meetings in Geneva or outside of Geneva and present it to the 21st Programme Coordinating Board meeting.

Possible format of PCB thematic segments

A. Rationale

2. The General Assembly 2006 *Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS* recognized (operational paragraph 50¹), the central role UNAIDS has to play in promoting global coordination on AIDS.
3. At the June 2007 PCB meeting, delegates expressed the view that, in order to perform this coordinating function, the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board should:
 - sharpen its substantive focus, allowing for more in-depth consideration of key issues affecting the global AIDS response; and
 - become more inclusive, creating the space for a broader range of actors to interact, exchange views and present experiences on matters of common interest.
4. The introduction of a thematic segment as a component of all PCB meetings was approved by the Board as a way to address the two above challenges.

¹ 50. Call upon the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, including its Co-sponsors, to assist national efforts to coordinate the AIDS response, as elaborated in the “Three Ones” principles and in line with the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors; assist national and regional efforts to monitor coordination on HIV/AIDS, including through the thematic sessions of the Programme Coordinating Board;

B. Added value

5. Currently, policy debate on AIDS takes place in a number of venues. These include international and regional AIDS conferences; General Assembly meetings and various partnership fora such as convened by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund). Despite the existence of these mechanisms, PCB thematic segments hold the potential to add significant value to the global AIDS response. In particular, such segments would:
 - leverage the unique legitimacy and convening power of the UN system—building on its neutrality, inclusiveness and multilateralism—while going beyond the purely intergovernmental nature of typical UN processes so as to establish much needed dialogue between sectors and players; and
 - promote better integration of policy and operational considerations, building on the know-how and expertise developed through UNAIDS' work, so as to facilitate more action-oriented discussions than would normally be the case for forums such as international conferences and General Assembly meetings.
6. This of course does not mean that PCB thematic segments should happen in isolation. On the contrary, all efforts should be made by the UNAIDS Secretariat and the Board constituencies to ensure that PCB thematic segments are linked, as much as possible, to the debates taking place in other relevant contexts.

C. Objectives

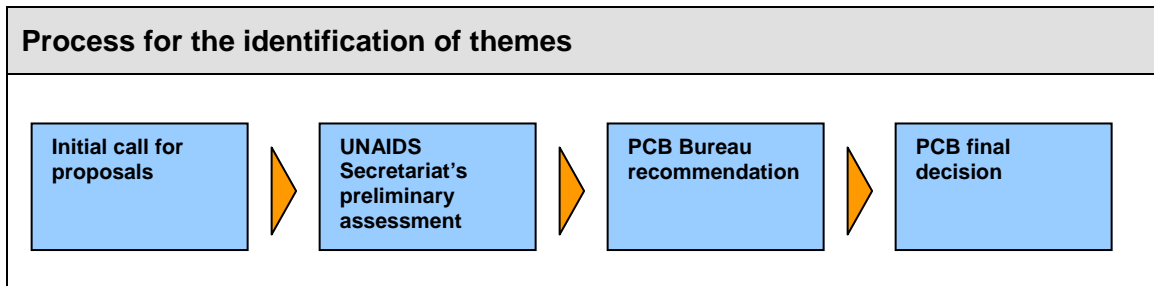
7. The thematic segment of PCB meetings should be positioned in such a way as to serve as a bridge between the decision-making process that takes place during regular PCB sessions and the broader policy debate on AIDS—particularly with respect to emerging issues and issues which have not yet been thoroughly discussed by the PCB. As such, thematic segments should pursue the following specific objectives.

Objectives of PCB thematic segments
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foster dialogue, facilitate shared learning and promote mutual accountability among different actors, thus strengthening global coordination on AIDS;• Bring broadbased, multistakeholder policy debates on key emerging themes to bear more directly on the operations of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS;• Bring the vast expertise and know-how developed within the Joint Programme to bear more directly on the work of a wide range of actors in the AIDS response.

8. Under appropriate circumstances, some PCB thematic segments may result in an outcome document, possibly including recommendations for action. However, this should not be regarded as a key objective for these segments, since their main *raison d'être* should rather be the facilitation of dialogue. Similarly, the possibility of achieving consensus should not drive the selection of discussion topics, as the success of the thematic segment will depend largely on its ability to address a broad array of issues. Recommendations that the thematic segment may have for UNAIDS' action will have to be endorsed by the regular segment of the meeting.

D. Identification of themes

9. In keeping with the current PCB agenda-setting process, the theme for PCB thematic segments should be decided by the Board upon recommendation of the PCB Bureau. This recommendation should be based on a call for proposals directed to all PCB constituencies and possibly other key actors to be selected by the PCB Bureau upon UNAIDS' recommendation. UNAIDS would assist the PCB Bureau in identifying relevant partners to be consulted and would prepare a preliminary assessment of the proposed themes for the Bureau's consideration (see box below).



10. The assessment of the proposed themes should be based on the criteria outlined below:

Criteria for the identification of themes	
• Broad relevance	The issue addressed by PCB thematic segments should be of relevance to the global AIDS response.
• Responsiveness	The identification of themes should be responsive to the interests, concerns and information needs of a broad range of actors in the global AIDS response.
• Focus	The selected themes should be sufficiently focused to allow for in-depth consideration in a relatively limited period of time (typically one day).
• Scope for action	The theme should address possible and necessary action to undertaken in the response to AIDS, rather than purely theoretical or academic issues.

11. Only one theme should be considered at each thematic segment, so as to ensure the focus and depth of the discussion. Additionally, in order to retain its ability to address emerging themes in a timely fashion, the PCB should identify topics from one session to the other. The UNAIDS Secretariat, on the basis of the PCB discussion and in consultation with the PCB Bureau, would then develop detailed agenda items and identify resource people as necessary.

E. Participation

12. In the absence of formal decision-making, the distinction between Board members and observers will be suspended for the thematic segments of PCB meetings. Hence, for the duration of these segments, all registered delegates will be regarded simply as “participants” sharing an equal right to engage in the discussion. All procedural rules based on the distinction between Board members and observers (including seating arrangements, and speaking protocol) will be suspended for the duration of the thematic segment of the PCB meeting. The PCB Bureau may be requested by the Board to develop specific rules of procedure for the thematic segment, if and as necessary.
13. Participation in PCB thematic segments should be as broad as possible. However, the identification of key partners—as well as the appropriate level of seniority—will depend on the nature of the topic under consideration and therefore vary from session to session. At present, PCB meetings are open, not only to the regular Board constituencies, but also to all other interested parties upon written application for observer status (which in keeping with the PCB *modus operandi* paragraph 12 can be granted by the UNAIDS Executive Director in consultation with the Chairperson of the PCB). However, the variety of participants in the PCB has not always matched what would be expected for a thematic segment. In order to address this issue, UNAIDS will engage in proactive efforts to ensure the participation of all relevant actors, including:
 - all regular Board constituencies (PCB members and observer states, PCB nongovernmental organizations, and UNAIDS cosponsoring organizations);
 - key partners already receiving invitations and often attending regular PCB sessions (such as the global foundations; members of the Global Fund Board, members of the UNAIDS’ Cosponsors boards and broader civil society organizations, including organizations of people living with HIV); and
 - key partners that have not yet been very closely involved in PCB meetings (such as private sector and trade union representatives as well as representatives of the academic and research world).
15. For all of these actors, the relevance of the items on the agenda, the diversity of the participants attending, the quality of the analysis produced on selected topics and the opportunity to exchange perspectives will be key incentives to participation.
16. Non-invited organizations interested in participating in the meeting could submit a written application to the UNAIDS Executive Director who would, when appropriate, grant participant status in consultation with the Chairperson of the PCB. The number of registered participants will be taken into account when examining applications in view of the need to maintain discussions that are interactive and participatory.

F. Format of sessions

17. As a rule, thematic segments of PCB meetings should take place over at least one day, before or after the regular segment depending on the nature of the topic as well as logistical considerations.
18. An appropriate format for the segment will have to be identified on a case-by-case basis in light of the theme selected for the segment. A number of principles, however, could be put forward to guide the design of the sessions.

Principles for the design of sessions	
All PCB thematic sessions should be designed in such a way as to be:	
• Interactive	Based on an open, frank dialogue that is responsive to the issues at hand and supportive of shared learning.
• Broadly owned	Based on the active involvement of individuals from all sectors represented at the meeting as resource people, presenters or moderators.

19. In order to ensure that thematic segments are supplied with relevant information, UNAIDS could commission, when appropriate, dedicated research on the selected topic ahead of the session. Participants in the thematic sessions will be invited to present evidence-informed discussion papers as well.
20. Side events may be organized by UNAIDS in collaboration with other partners in order to support the main thematic discussion. These could include:
 - “stakeholders’ dialogue” events aimed at gathering a range of diverse perspectives around the same table;
 - “community of practice” events, aimed at facilitating an exchange of views among a relatively homogeneous group of actors; and
 - “country case studies” where voluntary national presentations could be given by donor as well as programme countries.
21. Within this context, and building on the need emphasized by several stakeholders for the closer involvement of the private sector, the possibility of holding a business forum on AIDS in conjunction with PCB meetings’ thematic segments could be explored.
22. UNAIDS may avail itself of the services of external consultants with specific expertise in the facilitation of participatory processes in order to strengthen the interactive character of the sessions. Web-based broadcasting could also be explored as a way to better document the proceedings and expand the reach of the discussions taking place during the meetings.

G. Cost implications

23. The table below estimates the cost implications of the proposed PCB thematic segments (in the case of Geneva-based meetings).

Estimated cost implications of PCB meetings thematic segments		
Item	Assumptions and comments	Estimated cost in US\$
Preparatory research	Based on country-level existing data	50 000
Facilitation services	May not always be needed	10 700
Participation of resource persons	Travel and per diem for 10 resource persons for 3 days	46 000
One-day per diem for PCB members funded by UNAIDS	Additional day of the PCB meeting for approximately 25 persons	5000
Logistics	Conference facilities and interpretation based on average of PCB meetings in Jamaica and Lusaka	105 000
Web broadcasting	Cost for one day	15 000
Total estimated cost		231 700

Analysis of holding meetings in and outside Geneva

A. Financial implications of Geneva-based meetings

Cost of Geneva-based PCB meetings for UNAIDS		
Item	Description	Estimated cost in US\$
Logistics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conference rooms • Equipment and supplies • Catering 	100 000
Interpreters	Contracts for interpretation services	50 000
Participants' travel	DSA and air tickets for participants whose expenses are covered by UNAIDS	100 000
Total estimated cost		250 000

25. UNAIDS does not foresee the costs estimated above to change significantly in the near future. However, the cost of running a parallel system of field visits for Board members, should this be recommended by the PCB, would need to be taken into account when comparing the financial implications of field-based and Geneva-based meetings.

B. Financial implications of meetings based outside Geneva

26. The cost of organizing Board meetings outside of Geneva is dependent on a number of highly variable factors and therefore very difficult to estimate. However, the following general observations could be made.

- Logistics-related costs to be borne by UNAIDS for the organization of meetings outside Geneva could be either sensibly higher or sensibly lower than those related to Geneva-based meetings. This will largely depend on the terms of the cost-sharing agreement with the host country (see also the table “Cost of PCB meetings outside Geneva for the UNAIDS Secretariat since 2001”).
- Interpretation-related costs for meetings outside Geneva could be, generally speaking, assumed to be higher than those related to Geneva-based meetings. This is mainly due to the fact that interpreters may not be available locally for all languages in the venue chosen to host the meeting.
- Costs related to participants’ travel could be assumed to be analogous for meetings based in Geneva or outside. The organization of meetings outside Geneva, however, will involve significant additional costs related to the cost of Secretariat and some Cosponsor’ staff’s travel. Such costs could be estimated at US\$ 125 000 per meeting on the basis of the following assumptions.

Estimated cost of UNAIDS’ staff participation in meetings outside Geneva²	
Item	Key assumptions
Number of staff members attending the meeting	15
Average number of travel days per staff member	5
Cost of air ticket	US\$ 1000–4000
Per diem	US\$ 200

27. The table below shows the overall costs borne by UNAIDS for the organization of meetings outside Geneva since 2001 (not including costs incurred for Secretariat staff travel to the meeting location). The related issue of field visits and associated costs is covered in section E.

² Calculated only for Secretariat staff, not including Cosponsors’ travel

Cost of field-based PCB meetings since 2001	
Venue and dates	Costs borne by UNAIDS
Estoril, Portugal, 11–12 December 2002	US\$ 27,206 (report writer, participants' travel)
Montego Bay, Jamaica, 14–15 December 2004	US\$ 293 193 (logistics, interpretation services, UNAIDS funded participants)
Lusaka, Zambia, 6–8 December 2006	US\$ 451 437 (logistics, interpretation services, UNAIDS funded participants)

C. Non-financial benefits of holding meetings outside Geneva

28. During the discussion on governance reform at the 19th PCB meeting, several delegates pointed out the possible benefits of holding PCB meetings outside Geneva. These include:

- sensitization of local political leadership in the country hosting the meeting and exposure to the AIDS epidemic in the host country for PCB delegates coming from other regions and also through the organization of field visits;
- encouragement of country and regional level mobilization around key AIDS-related issues as well as increased understanding of governance processes through enhanced participation of local civil society;
- field visits by PCB members to better understand the reality of the epidemic and the work of UNAIDS;
- with respect to themes holding particular relevance for the selected country and region, the possibility to tap into local expertise and know-how.

D. Identification of venues for meetings outside Geneva

29. The PCB may wish to agree on the following criteria as a basis for the assessment of expression of interests in hosting PCB meetings outside Geneva.

Criteria for the selection of PCB meetings' venues outside Geneva	
• Regional rotation	The selection of venues for meetings outside Geneva should be based on regional rotation to be managed by the PCB Bureau.
• Cost-sharing	Potential host countries should be prepared to bear a substantial portion of the meeting costs (possibly with support from donors).
• Local expertise	The presence of unique local expertise on an issue on the agenda of the meeting may be considered an additional element in the selection of the venue for the meeting.
• Local facilities	The presence of appropriate conference and accommodation.

30. The cost-sharing principle could be operationalized through the signing of a host country agreement (similar to that used by the Global Fund) which would be annexed to the modus operandi of the Board.

E. Organization of field visits

31. The feedback on the value of field visits that have been organized over the last years in connection with PCB meetings has generally been very positive. For many delegates this provided a valuable opportunity to gain first-hand insights on the reality of local AIDS responses and facilitate cross-fertilization among regions.

32. Since field visits have been so far linked to PCB meetings outside Geneva, the way forward will depend on what the PCB decides regarding the location of future sessions. In this context, should the PCB decide to hold all its future meetings in Geneva, field visits could still be organized. PCB members would travel to relevant destinations between sessions and report back to the full PCB membership during regular meetings under dedicated agenda items. UNAIDS could submit proposed destinations and missions' terms of reference to the PCB for approval. Relevance to the issues on the PCB agenda should be viewed as one the main criteria for the identification of missions' destinations. However, the possibility of linking these visits to other events such as regional conferences and Global Fund meetings in the field should also be kept in mind. In this instance field visits would be composed of five PCB delegates to be appointed by the PCB. The UNAIDS Cosponsors and Secretariat would be represented by their staff in the country receiving the visit, plus one or two staff members from the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsor Headquarters.

33. The cost of a visit could be estimated at US\$ 30 000–50 000 on the basis of the following assumptions.

Estimated cost of a field visit	
Item	Key assumptions
Number of PCB delegates	5
Number of UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsor Headquarter staff	2
Travel days	5
Cost of air ticket (per traveler)	US\$ 1000–4000
Per diem (per day, per traveler)	US\$ 200
In-country expenditures (e.g. local travel, meeting facilities, etc.)	US\$ 15 000

34. Should the PCB decide to continue periodically holding meetings outside Geneva, field visits for PCB delegates could:

- continue to be organized for all interested delegates in connection with field-based meetings as it has been the case until now;
- be restricted to a maximum number of participants e.g. 100 to enable appropriate logistical and budgetary planning and to optimize participation;
- be based on the model described above;
- be based on a combination of the two models.

Action for the Programme Coordinating Board

35. The PCB is requested to review the proposals in this paper and take decisions on the following points:

- a. objectives of PCB thematic segments;
- b. process for the identification of themes for PCB thematic segments;
- c. participants in PCB thematic segments;
- d. format of sessions for PCB thematic segments;
- e. venues (Geneva or outside Geneva) of future PCB meetings;
- f. criteria for the selection of venues for PCB meetings held outside Geneva; and
- g. organization of field visits for PCB delegates.