

UNAIDS PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD WORKING GROUP

Second meeting of the PCB Working Group on the Thematic Segment of the 58th PCB meeting

Beyond 2025: Countering health inequities through sustaining the HIV response, human rights and harm reduction for people who use drugs

Meeting Summary

Date: 14 April 2026

Venue: Conference Room 6 And Teams

Agenda

- **Welcome and introduction**
- **Presentation of and discussion on the first draft of the thematic segment Background Note**
- **Presentation of and discussion on the draft agenda for the thematic segment**
- **Next steps**

SUMMARY

1. **Welcome and introduction**

Morten Ussing, Director of Governance, UNAIDS Secretariat, welcomed participants to the second meeting of the PCB Working Group established to prepare the thematic segment of the 58th PCB meeting on “Beyond 2025: Countering health inequities through sustaining the HIV response, human rights and harm reduction for people who use drugs.”

He recalled the purpose of convening the Working Group, noting that the thematic segment constitutes a full day on the PCB agenda and allows for an in-depth discussion on a specific programmatic area within the AIDS response.

Mr Ussing noted that topics addressed through the thematic segment could often be approached from many different angles, with various possible focuses and approaches. In this context, he emphasized that the Working Group existed to create ownership among PCB constituencies and played an important role in shaping both the agenda for the day and the documentation that informs it.

He expressed appreciation for the Working Group’s comments on the first draft of the background note and the draft agenda circulated in advance of the meeting. He also thanked Working Group members who had submitted written comments following the last meeting, both on the outline of the background note and the zero-draft agenda, noting that these had been integrated into the revised documents.

Before giving the floor to the Secretariat to present the first draft of the background note, Mr Ussing recalled that the call for submission of case studies and good practices had been issued

on 19 March 2026 to PCB members, Permanent Missions and Working Group members. He emphasized the high level of interest in the topic, with more than 50 case studies received.

He noted that all regions were represented, although only one case study had been received from the MENA region. A selected set of case studies would be used to illustrate key elements of the background note, and all submissions would be compiled into a conference room paper accompanying the background note. As highlighted previously, the case studies would also be used by UNAIDS to inform other background papers, ensuring impact beyond the thematic segment.

Mr Ussing then gave the floor to Ms Dasha (Daria) Ocheret to present the first draft of the background note.

2. Presentation of and discussion on the first draft of the thematic segment Background Note

Dasha informed the Working Group that the first draft of the background note had been circulated in advance of the meeting. She noted that, despite limited space, the draft aimed to capture a wide range of nuances and recent developments and addressed almost all elements of the agreed outline. She further highlighted that the draft did not include financial data and acknowledged gaps related to the availability of data on chemsex and intersectionalities.

Member states:

- Highlighted that the report is very rich and expressed appreciation for the work that had been done on the background note.
- reminded the group of the PCB audience and the importance of having a clear call for action.
- Emphasized that harm reduction is a broad term and also a highly political and sensitive one, and that it is important to unpack harm reduction for the lay person as well as discuss the practicalities of what can be done in different countries and contexts.
- Discussed the scope for addressing women and youth further.
- Highlighted the importance of integration of harm reduction and making sure there are concrete examples of integration in the long term.

NGO Delegation:

- Expressed appreciation for the recognition of structural determinants mentioned in the latest iteration.
- Noted that intersectionality still needed strengthening – highlighting the overlapping vulnerabilities and realities of people who use drugs and contexts where chemsex, sex work, queer communities and other communities come together.
- Emphasized that the integration chapter could be leaning too much towards health system perspectives and could be more explicit on community leadership and community-led HIV responses.
- Suggested to use language from the PCB NGO report of 2025 and proposed to provide more detailed written comments.

Cosponsors:

- Expressed appreciation for the great number of case studies received given the short time, reflecting the importance and timeliness of the topic.

- Encouraged to reflect some of the case studies in the background note.
- Shared a reference for sustainability and models of integration: *Planning and Managing HIV Programmes for Key Populations* (HIV Prevention Coalition / UNAIDS resource).
- Suggested adding “in the context of HIV prevention” when mentioning harm reduction.
- Emphasized that it should be highlighted that some countries do not implement the full harm reduction package, but parts of it, as a positive thing.

3. Presentation of and discussion on the draft agenda for the thematic segment

Umunyana Rugege, Head of Human Rights at the UNAIDS Secretariat, presented the draft agenda for the thematic segment, structured as a full-day meeting (2 July 2026) comprising an opening dialogue, three thematic panels, and a concluding session. The agenda aims to advance the Global AIDS Strategy 2026–2031 by addressing structural barriers affecting people who use drugs.

She highlighted that the thematic segment is structured around the following core focus areas:

- Advancing human rights, legal reform, and decriminalization as enablers of access to HIV services.
- Ensuring sustainable harm reduction, including domestic financing and integration into primary health care while preserving community-led responses.
- Strengthening community leadership, particularly of networks of people who use drugs.
- Addressing intersectional inequalities, including those affecting women, youth, incarcerated populations, and people in humanitarian or displacement settings.

The opening segment would include a high-level keynote dialogue bringing together UNAIDS, UNODC, Member States and community representatives to set the political and strategic context, alongside presentation of key data and background paper highlights.

The first Panel 1 would discuss inequalities: how structural and social inequalities—including stigma, gender, age, incarceration, and crisis settings—limit access to HIV prevention, treatment, and harm reduction, with emphasis on lived experiences and community-led approaches.

The second panel would focus on human rights and legal reform: Centers on the UNAIDS/UNDP/INPUD decriminalization guidance, examining how criminalization undermines HIV outcomes and how rights-based legal reforms and protection of civic space can improve health and social outcomes.

Panel 3 would explore Sustainable financing: Addresses chronic underfunding of harm reduction, donor transition challenges, and the need for domestic financing mechanisms, integration into UHC/primary health care, and safeguarding community-led models.

Member states:

- Mentioned that Panel 1 could benefit from more storytelling in order to bring the audience into the situation.

NGO Delegation:

- Highlighted that the agenda needs linked experiences – speakers who can represent intersections, not individual populations.
- Expressed support for a speaker who would be able to cover chemsex and injecting drug use, especially among LGBTI communities in sexualised and nightlife settings.
- Discussed that the first panel could look at contexts and intersections, not populations.
- Recommended a pre-meeting or training for Member States to provide more information about drug use and HIV.

Cosponsors:

- Suggested UNODC's participation at the highest possible level.
- Noted that the agenda is very comprehensive and may benefit from further prioritization
 - All three topics are important, but unless more time is allocated, panels may need to be split.
 - Proposed for WHO to participate on Panel 3 for an update on normative guidance, integration with health systems and primary health care.
 - Suggested that UNDP could share examples of social contracting, or the Global Fund.
 - Civic space panel suggestion:
 - Suggested the panel on civic space shorter or integrate civic space into other panels (foreign agent laws, etc.).
- Suggested joint presentations.

Umunyana thanked all the participants. She noted that video messages and joint presentations could be used as part of the thematic segment. She highlighted that it would be helpful to return to the Excel speaker list and identify must-have speakers, given the length of the list. She observed that civic space is highly intersectional and suggested that it could be addressed through a shorter intervention or through contributions from the audience. She further noted that it would make sense to invite the Global Fund. Finally, she clarified that the referenced guidance is not only a UNAIDS product, but was developed jointly with UNDP and INPUD.

4. Next steps

In outlining the next steps, Mr Ussing recalled that the call for best practices remained open until close of business on Friday 17 April 2026, and that submissions from all regions were encouraged. He noted that the Secretariat would proceed with completing the background note, ensuring that all comments received were carefully considered. He also emphasized that the draft agenda would be reworked to reflect the full range of inputs and suggestions provided by Working Group members. He thanked the Working Group members for their time and engagement and closed the meeting.