Agenda item 6

UNAIDS/PCB (59)/26.28

PROCESS FOR THE SELECTION OF THE NEXT UNAIDS JOINT PROGRAMME EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Report prepared by the PCB Bureau

UNAIDS

8–11 December 2026 | Geneva, Switzerland
UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board
Issue date: (24 November 2026)

Additional documents for this item:

Action required at this meeting—the Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

- Recalling decision 3.5 of the Special Session of the Programme Coordinating Board of October 2026, *approves* the Terms of Reference of the Search Committee for the nomination of the next UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director (UNAIDS/PCB (59)/26.28).

Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions: none.

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Background to the process for the selection of the next UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director

1. At the Special Session of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) on 26 October 2026, the UNAIDS Executive Director announced that she would complete her service as Executive Director of UNAIDS on 31 December 2026.

2. As per the established process by ECOSOC, the next UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director would be appointed by the Secretary-General upon recommendation of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) following consultation with Member States and other interested parties, including the PCB NGO Delegation. This paper seeks to describe the search process and terms of reference of the Search Committee in charge of this task.

3. Beyond the established ECOSOC framework providing the institutional framework for the appointment, the development of the nomination process has benefited from the experience and guidance of the Board, including its reflections on previous processes. In this regard, at the end of the previous nomination process, the Board had a debate about the lessons learned from the process to ensure these would be the basis for future processes. Accordingly, the 2026 nomination process will build on the processes of 2019 and 2008 (the description of these processes can be found in the Lessons Learned on the Nomination Process of the UNAIDS Executive Director), which remain solid references, while taking into account the transition and integration of UNAIDS into the UN system and beyond, the UN80 Initiative, shifts in global governance and health architecture as well as the current HIV epidemic and response.

PCB decisions and Bureau action

4. Considering the above, in its decision points 3.5 and 3.6 of the October 2026 Special Session, the PCB called for the immediate initiation of the preparations for the selection process for the next UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director by the PCB Bureau, based on the lessons learned from the previous selection processes. It also requested the PCB Bureau to a) submit the Terms of Reference for the Search Committee for the nomination of the UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director at the 59th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board, and b) to prepare the Terms of Reference for the UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director and present these for intersessional approval by the PCB before 1 February 2027:

   - 3.5 *Requests* the PCB Bureau to immediately initiate the preparations for the selection process for the next UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director, based on the lessons learned from the previous selection processes, as reflected in document UNAIDS/PCB (45)/19.31 rev1, and submit the Terms of Reference for the Search Committee for the nomination of the UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director at the 59th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board;

   - 3.6 *Requests* the PCB Bureau to prepare the Terms of Reference for the UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director and present these Terms of Reference for intersessional approval by the Programme Coordinating Board before 1 February 2027;

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5. Following the Special Session of the Programme Coordinating Board, the PCB Bureau met on 3 November 2026 to take action on the PCB decision points.

6. PCB Bureau members supported the proposal to begin, to the extent possible, preparatory work in December including preparing the call for nominations for the Search Committee and reviewing the approved competencies of the new Executive Director, which are described in the terms of reference of the Search Committee, as a basis for the development of the terms of reference of the new Executive Director.

7. The inclusion of an agenda item during the 59th PCB meeting in December 2026 to approve the terms of reference of the Search Committee, as finalized by the Bureau, was also agreed by the PCB Bureau.

2026-2027 selection process and milestones

8. In view of the very tight timeline, and the PCB's decision on "immediate initiation of the preparations for the selection process for the next UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director", the PCB Bureau agreed to immediately consider the options for the establishment of a Search Committee, and to build on the composition of the 2027 PCB Bureau for its establishment, which would allow to respond to the request to advance swiftly on the process.

9. The PCB Bureau also agreed to draw on the Lessons Learned on the Nomination Process of the UNAIDS Executive Director[1] presented at the PCB's 45th meeting in December 2019, and decided to the following estimated timeline as reflected in the table on page 11.

Composition of the Search Committee for the selection of the UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director

10. At its 3 November 2026 meeting, the PCB Bureau agreed that the composition of the Search Committee would build on the 2019 process, in line with recommendation *a)* stating: "the Programme Coordinating Board should establish a Search Committee composed of representatives from all regional groups, two NGO delegates and four cosponsors (to include the CCO Chair) with detailed terms of reference on which to align the process and to base the assessments of candidates.

11. The PCB Bureau agreed that the 2026 Bureau would initiate as much preparatory work as possible in December, including reviewing the approved competencies, as a strong basis for the 2027 PCB Bureau to use for the terms of reference required for the Executive Director position. This preparatory work would then be handed over to the incoming 2027 Bureau for further consultation and the expedited drafting of the Terms of Reference of the Executive Director position in January 2027.

Bureau members + model

[1] https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/14112019_UNAIDS_PCB45_Lessons-Learned-on-Search-Committee_EN.pdf

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- **Member States**: The three Bureau Officers' ECOSOC regional groups. In addition, the Chair of the PCB will issue a call to the two remaining ECOSOC regional groups that are not represented in the 2027 Bureau.
- **PCB NGOs**: The two PCB NGOs represented in the 2027 Bureau.
- **Cosponsors:** The Chair of the 2027 CCO, with three additional Cosponsors nominated by the CCO Chair.

12. The Director Governance shall provide governance and logistical support to the Search Committee, including travel and meeting arrangements, as necessary and applicable based on the Modus Operandi of the PCB. He will participate in meetings as the Governance anchor and working directly with the Chair of the Committee (to be elected from within its membership as per the modalities of work set out below). The procurement rules of UNAIDS Secretariat will be used for recruitment of support mechanisms as requested by the Search Committee.

Process for the establishment of the Search Committee

13. As soon as possible after approval at the 59th Programme Coordinating Board Meeting of the Terms of Reference of the Search Committee and the election of Officers for 2027, the 2026 Chair of the Programme Coordinating Board will invite nominations from the 2027 Bureau Office holders, the two regional groups that are not represented in the Bureau, the NGO Delegation, and the CCO, with the attached terms of reference; each group should present a consensus nominee.

14. If the number of nominations exceeds or is less than the number of places on the Committee for a constituency/regional group, the Chair of the Programme Coordinating Board will contact all members of that constituency/regional group represented on the Board for further discussion and agreement.

15. Once the Committee is established, the Chair of the Programme Coordinating Board will communicate the names of the members to all Member States, PCB NGO Delegation and Cosponsors.

Scope of work of the Search Committee

16. The Search Committee will:

- Based on recommendation *b)*[2] of the Lessons Learned, the Search Committee would be supported by a consultant and a search firm for which recruitment should take place in parallel to the establishment of the Search Committee. The latter would guide and oversee the work of the support mechanism;

- Based on the approved full terms of reference for the position of UNAIDS Executive Director, develop a scoring tool with the support of the Search Firm as a basis to evaluate the candidates;

- Develop the text of advertisement and distribute to the PCB. Based on recommendation *d)*[3] of the Lessons Learned, the Search Committee should

[2] https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/14112019_UNAIDS_PCB45_Lessons-Learned-on-Search-Committee_EN.pdf
[3] *Ibidem*.

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strategically approach advertising through a balance of online advertising and a targeted search to maximize exposure, efficiency, and resource use;

- Ensure that in addition to the advertisement, a process for submitting nominations and individual applications will be established and duly adhered to;

- Conduct interviews, supported by the search firm, to screen candidates and evaluate them against the desired core competencies and experience as agreed in the competencies and experience for the position of Executive Director;

- Prepare a report of the work of the Search Committee for the PCB's consideration of the shortlist of candidates;

- Be responsible for submitting to the Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) a report of the process and the outcomes including the short list of candidates in order of preference together with any comments and recommendations of the PCB;

- In the nomination process, the Search Committee will draw on the Terms of Reference, including performance expectations for the position of UNAIDS Executive Director, as approved by the PCB.

Modalities of work of the Search Committee

17. The Search Committee will:

- Elect a Chair from within its membership;

- Follow the below code of conduct signed by all members;

- Elicit candidates from the broadest diversity in terms of gender, nationality, culture and educational background, including encouraging and welcoming geographical diversity of candidates;

- Provide a note of each meeting of the Search Committee to the PCB members, and prepare a report of the work of the Committee, including the shortlist of candidates, to be presented to the 60th meeting of the PCB in June 2027;

- The Chair of the Search Committee will participate as an observer in the CCO interviews and nomination process. The CCO may also meet in closed session.

Code of Conduct for the Search Committee

- Members of the Committee, although nominated by the PCB constituencies, do not represent any particular constituency. They do not take instructions from, provide information to, nor act according to the particular interests of any constituency;

- No committee member shall advocate for, or influence the nomination process, in favour of a particular candidate;

- The actions and deliberations of Committee members will be objective and impartial;

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- The members will weigh the merits of the candidates, in arriving at a recommended shortlist. The members will not come to meetings predisposed to advocate for a particular candidate;

- Members will give full and thorough consideration to all candidates on the basis of merit and competencies, without regard to nationality, race or gender;

- Based on recommendation f of the Lessons Learned, the members should give careful consideration to strong language skills in the two working languages;

- The meetings of the Search Committee will be closed. Members will observe the highest standards of impartiality, neutrality, confidentiality, respect for due process and selection based solely on merit;

- Members are expected to attend all meetings (exceptions may be made in force majeure situations). Members will not be represented by alternates or substitute members;

- Deliberations will be conducted in private and members will respect confidentiality regarding the whole process, both during and after the process. The views and statements of the different members will not be repeated, summarized, or referred to by members outside the meetings;

- Members commit to not quote any individual views of other members;

- The overall Executive Director selection process will be transparent. A report of each Search Committee Meeting will be published on the UNAIDS PCB website in English and French;

- The Committee as a whole is expected to adhere to the agreed timetable.

18. In addition, recommendations *h)* to *k)* of the Lessons Learned stipulate the following:

- The Search Committee should use a shared portal that allows online edits and comments while maintaining the restrictions on downloading, copying and printing;

- Adequate time should be given for full and well-defined due diligence on candidates;

- The PCB should consider the inclusion of supplemental information on the candidates for their discussion, such as vision statements, or direct contact with short listed candidates at the PCB; and

- The Chair of the CCO will be present during the PCB deliberations to accurately reflect the opinions of the PCB at the next stage of the process.

Competencies and experience for the position of Executive Director

19. The full terms of reference for the position of the UNAIDS Executive Director will be agreed by the PCB before 1 February 2027, as per decisions 3.6 of the Special Session in October 2026.

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20. Pending the Programme Coordinating Board's approval of the updated Terms of Reference for the position of UNAIDS Executive Director by 1 February 2027, the Search Committee will draw upon the 2019 Lessons Learned on the Nomination Process of the UNAIDS Executive Director to ensure an open, transparent, and inclusive nomination process. Alongside these core criteria, the process will be guided by the overall strategic direction set out in the report of the PCB Working Group, seeking candidates with senior leadership experience in the HIV response, proven engagement with civil society, and demonstrated expertise in organizational transitions and/or integration.

Proposed timeline – any adjustments will be communicated to the PCB by the PCB Bureau

- In black: process for the establishment and work of the Search Committee
- In blue: process for the development of the terms of reference and selection of the Executive Director

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DATE	MILESTONE/DELIVERABLE	RESPONSIBLE PARTY
3 November	Bureau meeting to discuss and agree on next steps including draft process for the establishment of the Search Committee. Terms of reference (TOR) of the Search Committee timeline, desired competencies and experience of the Executive Director, steps for the nomination process and budget shared with the Bureau subsequently.	PCB Bureau
Week of 16 November	Selection process, terms of reference and outline composition of the Search Committee shared with Board members	PCB Bureau
Week of 23 November	PCB Bureau considers input from PCB members and finalizes the TOR of the Search Committee for PCB approval at the 59th PCB meeting	PCB Bureau and membership
24 November	TOR posted on the website for the 59th PCB meeting and all PCB members are asked to prepare any comments or input to be brought forward at the pre meeting on 30 November 2026	Secretariat
30 November	Inputs from PCB stakeholders on the TOR given at the PCB pre-meeting	PCB
At the latest 3 December	Revised version of the TOR posted online	Secretariat
8-11 December	PCB meeting – approval of process and TOR for search committee	PCB
Week of 14 December	Initiation bidding process for the Search Firm and recruitment of the support consultant	Secretariat
Week of 14 December	Chair of PCB invites proposals for membership of the Search Committee from the 2027 Bureau Officers and for the remaining two regions, the 2027 NGO Delegation, and the 2027 CCO (each group to present consensus nominees)	PCB Chair
January	PCB Bureau meeting to handover to new Bureau and to review the Terms of Reference (including performance expectations) for the UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director	PCB Bureau
January	Deadline for submission of nominations for Search Committee	PCB Chair

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January	Terms of reference for the UNAIDS Joint Programme Executive Director shared with PCB members	PCB Bureau
January	PCB Bureau Chair and Bureau Missions' briefing with PCB Stakeholders on the ED TORs.	PCB Bureau
January	PCB Bureau considers input from PCB members and finalizes the TOR of the ED for intersessional approval by the Programme Coordinating Board before 1 February 2027	PCB Bureau and membership
January	Composition of Search Committee is announced and transmitted by electronic means to PCB constituencies.	PCB Chair
January	Intersessional approval of the ED TOR on a no objection basis	PCB Bureau and membership
Week of 1 February	First meeting of the Search Committee	Search Committee
February	Second meeting of the Search Committee with the Search Firm	Search Committee
February	Issue call for nominations and applications; including advertisements in relevant international media as agreed by the Search Committee	Search Committee
Week of 29 March	Deadline for submission of nominations and applications	Search Committee and all constituencies
April	Third meeting of the Search Committee to review nominations and applications and establish a shortlist for interviews	Search Committee
April	Fourth meeting of Search Committee to interview candidates and establish a short list	Search Committee Chair
May	Chair of the Search Committee submits the Search Committee report, including shortlist to PCB members	Search Committee Chair

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29 June	60th meeting of the PCB: PCB discussion and consideration of the report of the Search Committee and the shortlisted candidates	PCB
July	The Search Committee Chair will send the list to the CCO Chair together with any comments and recommendations of the PCB	Search Committee Chair
July	CCO to consider the list of nominations and to interview short-listed candidates. The Chair of the Search Committee to participate as an observer in the CCO interview and formal nomination process. The CCO may also meet in closed session.	CCO Chair
July	CCO to send its recommendation to the UN Secretary-General.	CCO Chair

Estimated budget for the Search Committee process

A. Search Committee of 11 members

Meeting costs (4 meetings: 1 in person at UNAIDS Geneva and 3 virtual)	500
Travel (6 supported participants × 1 in-person meeting × US$1,200 economy return airfare)	7,200
Daily subsistence allowance (6 participants × 1 meeting × 3 nights × US$483)	8,694
Contingencies	5,000
SUBTOTAL A	**21,394**

B. Support mechanisms to the Search Committee

Consultant	30,000
Executive search firm	70,000
Advertisements	10,000
SUBTOTAL B	**110,000**
TOTAL ESTIMATED BUDGET	**US$131,394**

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