

Strengthening UNAIDS Secretariat to deliver on the global AIDS targets



\$42 million

Cost reductions in
2012 compared to 2011

70%

Staff in the field

10%

Decrease in staffing

20%

Drop in travel costs

Getting results

Delivering on the 2011 United Nations Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS and the Millennium Development Goals

The past few years have been witness to remarkable progress made in the global AIDS response. Results that a decade ago seemed unimaginable to achieve are now a reality: the rate of new HIV infections has fallen in most parts of the world, a record number of people are accessing antiretroviral treatment and more children are being born free from HIV.

This progress has happened against a rapidly changing development architecture. As the world races to the deadline for reaching Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), resources for the AIDS response have not significantly increased in the last two years but demand for services has risen and significant gaps in the response remain.

The *2011 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS*, adopted by the UN General Assembly, in June 2011, with its set of ten global AIDS targets, signals the international community's renewed commitment to the AIDS response and to the role of the United Nations system in leadership and coordination.

At the same time, the vision of 'Getting to Zero'—*zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, zero AIDS-related deaths*—has rallied political leaders and activists around an objective that has moved from aspiration to commitment to action.

In line with an evolving epidemic, the UNAIDS Secretariat has pursued a change agenda with the goal of positioning resources closer to the epidemic—to where the difference can be made with results delivered effectively, efficiently and creatively—with the following three overarching objectives to:

- **Ensure human and financial resources are aligned with corporate priorities and optimal deployment to support countries achieve the MDGs and the global AIDS targets;**
- **Continue strengthening country focus, and particularly in addressing the needs of the high impact countries; and**
- **Lower overall operating costs and demonstrate value for money.**

Organizational strengthening

The realignment of the Secretariat builds on a series of recent strategic initiatives, supported by several independent evaluations in helping to guide the Secretariat in driving change across all areas of its work.

Three specific Secretariat-wide initiatives—in the area of human resources, administration and organizational design—provided the necessary foundation for UNAIDS to become more effective, efficient and responsive in its support to countries.

- The Secretariat is a knowledge-based organization and its most valuable resource is its staff. In order to meet the global AIDS targets and respond to emerging needs, a **UNAIDS Human Resources Strategy**, launched in late 2010, outlines the vision and principles for development of a workforce that is diverse, mobile and able to work across disciplines. The Strategy, which integrates all areas of human resources management, is underpinned by the UNAIDS competency framework that sets the corporate standards for performance by defining the values and core competencies that staff must demonstrate through their work. Implementation of the Strategy is supported by a Human Resources Advisory Committee, a consultative body made up of staff from across the Secretariat and the Staff Association, that reviews human resource policies before they are issued.
- A **single administrative system**, implemented in 2011, has strengthened the provision of administrative services. Prior to 2011, the Secretariat operated within two different frameworks of staff regulations and rules (WHO and UNDP), requiring the use of separate management systems. Today, all UNAIDS staff have a UNAIDS contract and are governed by a single set of staff regulations and rules, ensuring equitable, fair and consistent treatment at country, regional and headquarters levels. A single enterprise resource planning (ERP) software has been put in place for all staff, an integrated Secretariat staffing table developed and a single budgeting and expenditure system deployed that has greatly improved financial management.
- A **functional review** of Headquarters, the Regional Support Teams (RSTs) and Country Offices was carried out to align human and financial resources with the UNAIDS vision and changing needs. It analyzed staffing

needs and organizational design against the vision and national epidemics and responses, as well as collected and analyzed external benchmarks; all helping to ensure staff and resource deployment reflect a country's environment and needs. To ensure a "human face" to change, a representative steering committee guided the extensive consultation and review process and provided recommendations to the UNAIDS Executive Director. Throughout the process, senior management engaged with the Staff Association.

Optimal deployment of staff and expertise

- In 2012, more than **80 UNAIDS staff have been redeployed** in the field, including the Regional Support Teams (RSTs) and the high impact countries, to better support countries in achieving the global AIDS targets. The shift in focus to countries has also contributed to achieving a staffing ratio of 70:30 in the field and Headquarters, respectively
- Some **50 positions have been reprofiled**, primarily in the field, in areas such as outreach, advocacy, strategic interventions, investment and efficiency, human rights and gender equality, to better respond to programme priorities and provide the most effective technical and operational support. Approaches to deliver more results at country level include consolidating offices, creating additional multi-country offices, establishing UNAIDS focal points directly in the offices of UN Resident Coordinators and placing greater reliance on National Officers.
- **Headquarters** has been streamlined and operates in a more flexible and agile configuration, responsive to emerging needs. RSTs have been reconfigured similar to Headquarters and tailored to regional needs.
- The **2012 Mobility exercise** presented opportunities for Headquarters, short-term and General Service staff to participate with an emphasis on strengthening capacity in the field. A number of entry-level professional positions were advertised (also in the 2013 Mobility exercise) to offer entry-level field opportunities for younger staff and staff in the General Service category across the organization.
- The realignment has resulted in the reduction of the Secretariat's **total staffing numbers from 904 in mid-2011 to 819** as of 1 April 2013.
- The strategic realignment has been carried out in close collaboration with the Staff Association. Key staffing measures that facilitated the realignment included a voluntary separation option, a career transition programme, and a provision that staff affected by the realignment are eligible to apply for internal vacancies up to one year after the end of their contract.

New strategies

- Implementation of the **Human Resources Strategy** led to revised policies on staff mobility and reassignment, recognition of personal status, staff development and learning, and career transition. A new performance and learning management tool is also in development.
- On International Women's Day 2013, the Secretariat launched a **Gender Action Plan** outlining seven action areas and measures to meet the Secretariat's workplace gender objectives, including leadership and accountability, organizational culture, and work-life balance. In 2012, UNAIDS was one of the first organizations to pilot the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).
- In March 2013, the Secretariat launched a **Whistleblower Protection Policy** to enhance the protection of all staff members who report suspected violations of the rules and regulations that govern UNAIDS or who cooperate with an audit or investigation. The UNAIDS Ethics Office administers the Secretariat's declaration of interest programme to strengthen public trust in the integrity of the organization.
- **Staff safety and security** remains a top priority for the Secretariat. Emergency preparedness for countries has been strengthened through the deployment of emergency communication kits in six RSTs. Security awareness has been promoted throughout the organization, including through e-learning courses on risk management and security awareness training for female staff. UNAIDS is fully engaged with UN common system security initiatives, including compliance with Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS).

Innovating solutions

- As a knowledge-based organization, a **new IT strategy** and governance framework was developed in 2012. It aligns IT services to the strategic and operational needs of UNAIDS and focuses the Secretariat's IT resources on harnessing and deploying technology and less on managing physical IT infrastructure.
- The Secretariat is moving **IT support operations to Nairobi**, reflecting the realignment's focus on improving support to countries, reducing operating costs and fostering innovation and technology.
- New information tools have been developed to facilitate data-informed decision-making and results-based management. A comprehensive set of **13 Key Performance Indicators** (KPIs), and a supporting dashboard, were launched in 2012 to provide regular and automatic updates of the organization's latest data on financial, administrative and programmatic performance.

A new business model

Effectiveness and accountability

The 2012-2015 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) is the instrument that operationalizes the UNAIDS Strategy and maximizes the coherence, coordination and impact of the UN response to AIDS by combining the efforts of Cosponsors and the Secretariat in a single framework. At all levels, budgets are allocated against activities linked to the global AIDS targets and particularly focused on the 38 high impact countries that account for the majority of new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths worldwide.

- The **UBRAF** results matrix has improved accountability by presenting a detailed overview of Cosponsor and Secretariat results against strategic goals and functions. Performance is measured using indicators at impact, outcome and output levels, and supplemented by case studies and in-depth assessments. A peer review brings together the Cosponsors and the Secretariat in a process to evaluate progress and performance.
- UNAIDS has a modest but catalytic budget (US \$485 million for 2012-2013), relying exclusively on voluntary contributions and representing less than 2 per cent of overall funding for AIDS. The **core budget of the Secretariat** is centred around its strategic functions: nearly four-fifths for activities in leadership, advocacy, coordination, coherence, partnerships and accountability, and the remainder for support and administrative services, from human resources to planning and reporting.
- The launch of a **Joint Programme Monitoring System** (JPMS) tool in 2012 has enabled reporting at country level to be collected in a uniform way for the first time. The reporting module of the JPMS makes it possible to generate reports by individual components (e.g. by country and region) and by a particular output, outcome or thematic area.
- The adoption of a **single administrative system** has enabled the implementation of a new business model for the Secretariat by harmonizing and simplifying administrative and operational processes. The single administrative system reinforces the Secretariat's

support to the Joint Programme by eliminating inefficiencies tied to reconciliation between different systems. It provides real-time financial monitoring, management and reporting, which strengthens transparency and accountability for resources.

- Several **core business activities have been consolidated** (e.g. expenditure control and compliance), roles and responsibilities (e.g. procurement and travel) delegated to field staff, supported by the WHO Global Service Centre, which provides UNAIDS a range of administrative services.
- The adoption of the **International Public Sector Accounting Standards** (IPSAS) in 2012—an international best practice—has improved the comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of UNAIDS' financial reporting. UNAIDS received a clean audit opinion on its 2012 financial statements, which were for the first time presented according to IPSAS.

Cost and value consciousness

- The Secretariat is reducing costs while maintaining quality and a high level of service. By streamlining Headquarters and implementing Secretariat-wide efficiency measures, **cost reductions of almost US\$ 42 million** were achieved in 2012 compared to 2011.
- As a result of the strategic realignment's focus on value for money and optimizing the use of resources, several cost saving measures have been instituted, such as the introduction of a self-booking travel tool in 2011 that provides greater flexibility and significant savings on transaction costs and airfares. Through this tool, and more effective travel planning and uptake of alternatives to travel, staff travel costs in 2012 were reduced by nearly 20% compared to 2011.
- On the '**greening**' of the Secretariat, an Emissions Reduction Strategy was developed for 2013 that sets out objectives, actions and responsibilities to minimize emissions. From travel reductions to the introduction of a "print on demand" system, environmentally-friendly programmes are saving money too.
- The Secretariat's participation in interagency mechanisms, such as the High Level Committee on Management and the UN Development Group, facilitates the sharing of cost saving measures and efficiency initiatives. Transferring such knowledge and best practices **supports UN system efforts for UN reform** and system wide coherence, and in particular improving efficiency and effectiveness within the UN—responding directly to QCPR recommendations and supporting the development of the second generation of Delivering as One.



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