

High-level panel on a resilient and fit-for-purpose UNAIDS Joint Programme in the context of the sustainability of the HIV response

Supporting countries to reach their 2030 HIV targets as part of the Sustainable Development Goals and maintain the gains beyond

Concept note and terms of reference¹

Background

As the world heads towards the 2030 deadline for ending AIDS as a public health threat, at a moment of compounding and competing global crises, the global HIV response and the UNAIDS Joint Programme are at a crossroads. Galvanizing political commitment to reaching 2030 HIV targets, and driving coordinated, multisectoral programmatic action in these next six years, will be critical for saving millions of lives and realizing the full benefits of the more than four decades of the response – as well as the many billions of dollars invested.

While tremendous progress has been made, urgent action remains necessary. AIDS claimed a life every minute in 2023, and there are more than 9 million people who are not yet accessing treatment. Intensified, focused efforts are needed to dramatically reduce the number of new HIV infections – an estimated 1.3 million in 2023. Just as the global HIV response has transformed global health in the last 25 years, innovation – as well as scaling up established responses – will be essential for taking forward and completing the journey. This requires strong partnerships and all-of-society approaches, from developing and ensuring access to HIV medicines and new prevention technologies, to accelerating scientific advancement towards a HIV vaccine and cure, to putting human rights at the centre of how universal health coverage, education and other pillars of social protection are delivered.

There is a path that ends AIDS, and this path advances the SDGs. The pathway is clear and can get us there by 2030, but only if leaders are bold – achieving this historic goal and preparing to sustain the gains beyond.

At its 53rd meeting in December 2023, the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) requested “the Executive Director and the Committee of the Cosponsoring Organizations to continue to ensure that the Joint Programme remains sustainable, resilient and fit-for-purpose, by revisiting the operating model, supported by external expert facilitation and through appropriate consultations, including with the PCB members and participants, reporting back at the June 2025 PCB meeting with recommendations which take into account the context of financial realities and risks to the Joint Programme and relevant recommendations of the Joint Inspection Unit, recognizing the importance of the findings of the mid-term review of the Global AIDS Strategy and development of a long-term strategy to 2030 and beyond, in aligning the Joint Programme”.² Towards these ends, the UNAIDS Executive Director, and the International Labour Organization Director-General, on behalf of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations, are convening this high-level panel on a resilient and fit-for-purpose UNAIDS Joint Programme in the context of the sustainability of the HIV response. The Panel will bring together diverse stakeholders in the HIV response, and work in an inclusive and collaborative manner to produce its recommendations. The Panel will consider

¹ Some elements of these Terms of Reference are to be co-created and further elaborated by the Panel leadership, within the broad objective set out below.

² See decision point 6.5.

https://www.unaids.org/sites/default/files/media_asset/PCB53_Decision%20Points_14Dec_Final.pdf

the evolution of the HIV pandemic and the global AIDS response, and evolving country needs and priorities and how to best respond to them, within the overall context of the Joint Programme's mandate as articulated by ECOSOC.³

The last major review and update of the UNAIDS operating model was informed by the 2017 *Global Review Panel on the Future of the UNAIDS Joint Programme Model*. The recommendation of the 2017 Global Review Panel contributed to the positive evolution of the Joint Programme, including the introduction of the country envelope funding mechanism. It contributed to the evolution of planning and reporting frameworks, reinforcing the accountability of the Cosponsors and the Secretariat for individual and joint results, and better showing the impact of those results for people living with and affected by HIV. With this positive precedent in mind, the present Panel will have an opportunity to reflect on the mandate and experience of the 2017 panel, and the subsequent follow up to the recommendations and action plan developed by the Joint Programme. It will also take into account the assessments and evaluations that have been carried out since that time, as well as broader global health, development and UN reform agendas that are currently being elaborated, with implications for the HIV response going forward.

Objective of the High-Level Panel

- Develop recommendations that can inform the response to the PCB's decision point 6.5 (December 2023), with a view to envisaging a resilient and fit-for-purpose operating model for the Joint Programme that builds on success but evolves as the epidemic and the political, social and economic context of the epidemic is evolving.

Structure and membership

The following key criteria have guided the selection of Panel members:

- representative of a key stakeholder or country in the HIV response and/or in the global health/development landscape;
- greater involvement of people living with HIV (GIPA);
- capacity and time to engage constructively throughout the duration of the Panel;
- clear understanding and deep knowledge of the Joint Programme and global health.

The co-convenors of the Panel have endeavoured to achieve an overall Panel composition that is diverse in terms of geographical representation, gender balance, communities represented and areas of technical expertise.

³ UNAIDS is mandated, by ECOSOC Resolution 1994/24, to:

- a. Provide global leadership in response to the epidemic;
- b. Achieve and promote global consensus on policy and programmatic approaches;
- c. Strengthen the capacity of the United Nations system to monitor trends and ensure that appropriate and effective policies and strategies are implemented at the country level;
- d. Strengthen the capacity of national Governments to develop comprehensive national strategies and implement effective HIV/AIDS activities at the country level;
- e. Promote broad-based political and social mobilization to prevent and respond to HIV/AIDS within countries, ensuring that national responses involve a wide range of sectors and institutions;
- f. Advocate greater political commitment in responding to the epidemic at the global and country levels, including the mobilization and allocation of adequate resources for HIV/AIDS-related activities.

Panel Co-convenors:

- Winnie Byanyima
UNAIDS Executive Director
- Gilbert Houngbo
International Labour Organization Director-General

Panel Co-chairs:

- Erika Castellanos
Executive Director of GATE (Global Action for Trans Equality)
- H.E. Dr. Cleopa Kilonzo Mailu
Former Cabinet Secretary for Health and former Permanent Representative of Kenya to the United Nations in Geneva
- Dr. John N. Nkengasong
U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator, Senior Bureau Official for Global Health Security and Diplomacy

Panel members:

- Five people from programme countries
- Three people from donor countries
- Seven representatives from civil society, including the International Community of Women Living with HIV (ICW), key populations networks / organizations, a youth representative and a faith community representative
- Global Fund representative
- Gates Foundation representative
- Representative from the private sector
- Representative from academia
- Two people bringing perspectives of the UN Resident Coordinator System

The Panel will be supported by a small secretariat, external expertise, and resource people from the Joint Programme.

Inputs and learning to support the Panel's work (illustrative examples)

- **Mid-term review** of the current Global AIDS Strategy (2021-2026), including country progress and gaps.
- Initial **scenarios and models on the future trajectory of the AIDS pandemic**.
- Analytical pieces setting out the future needs for accelerating progress towards the **2030 HIV targets** that are under development.
- Country scorecard data and technical summaries from the Global HIV Prevention Coalition, as well as an overview of **new HIV prevention technologies and programme innovations** that have the power to sharply bend the curve of the epidemic in the future, if accessible to all who can benefit from them.
- Analysis and data from the UNAIDS Reference Group on HIV and Human Rights, describing the **evolving policy and legal context and its impacts on the global HIV response**, and the political, policy and programmatic action required into the future to ensure an enabling environment for a sustainable response.
- Synthesis of **country needs emerging from the development of sustainability roadmaps for the HIV response**, and expectations of UN and partner support towards their implementation (across political, programmatic and financial dimensions).
- **Various assessments, reviews and evaluations of the Joint Programme** and specific areas of work (thematic and geographic), including the MOPAN and JIU reviews carried out since the 2017 Global Review Panel, as well as the most recent Performance Monitoring Reports submitted to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board.

- Overview of **funding trends for the global AIDS response and for the UNAIDS Joint Programme**, and **projections for future resource mobilization** within an evolving funding landscape characterized by less and less flexible core support for multilateral organizations and increased earmarking of Official Development Assistance.
- Analysis of various **global health, development and UN reform agendas** currently being elaborated, with implications for the HIV response and UN support to countries into the future, including the upcoming Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) 2025-2028.⁴

Working groups

The co-conveners and co-chairs may appoint working groups and task them with developing analysis and proposed recommendations for the Panel's consideration.

Preparations for the Panel's work

Ahead of the Panel's first meeting in October, the Panel leadership will elaborate its proposed programme of work, curate and develop background materials, and possibly establish working groups focused on specific products / analytical pieces. It will also consider possible methods for engaging a broader set of stakeholders.

Timelines for the Panel's activities and follow up

The Panel is to be a time-limited, focused effort that concludes its recommendations by March 2025, allowing for suitable follow-up ahead of the June 2025 PCB meeting, including with the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations at their meeting in May 2025. It is foreseen that the Panel's first and third meetings will be convened virtually, with the second meeting convened in-person (two days).

Panel deliberations phase: October 2024 - February 2025

- First meeting (virtual, 2 hours), 10 October
- Second meeting (two days, in person), 14-15 November; Lilongwe, Malawi
- Third and final meeting (virtual, 3 hours), week of 17 February 2025
- Finalization of report and recommendations, March 2025

Consultation / socialization phase: March-April 2025, which could include:

- PCB Bureau
- PCB NGOs
- Africa Group
- UNAIDS Group of Friends
- Civil society networks
- Structured Funding Dialogue (*TBD*)
- Strategy and UBRAF development processes

Consideration of the Panel's recommendations: May-June 2025

- Discussion of Panel recommendations with the CCO (May)
- Presentation of EXD/CCO recommendations to the PCB, in response to decision point 6.5 from the 53rd meeting of the PCB (June)

⁴ To be adopted by member states in late 2024. <https://ecosoc.un.org/en/what-we-do/oas-qcpr/quick-links/information-2024-qcpr>