

PRESS RELEASE

UNAIDS Board reiterates its strong commitment to the mandate of UNAIDS towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030

Board members back measures for UNAIDS to inspire United Nations reform in ensuring the highest standards of integrity and dignity at work and encourage all countries to close the funding gap in the global HIV response, including fully funding UNAIDS.

GENEVA, 29 June 2018—At UNAIDS' 42nd Programme Coordinating Board meeting, which took place in Geneva, Switzerland, on 26–28 June, Board members expressed their support for UNAIDS and underscored the critical role that the organization has to play in ending the AIDS epidemic.

In his opening address, the Executive Director of UNAIDS, Michel Sidibé, welcomed the Board's support and reiterated the importance of focusing on the challenges and opportunities ahead in reaching the [2020 Fast-Track commitments](#) agreed by the United Nations General Assembly. "The 37 million people who are living with HIV today, along with the 1.8 million who will acquire HIV over the course of this year, are counting on us. AIDS is not over—but it can be—and at UNAIDS we are fully committed to ending the AIDS epidemic."

The Board requested UNAIDS to continue to strengthen joint and collaborative action at the country level as part of United Nations reform efforts. Members also requested UNAIDS to continue to strengthen performance reporting aligned to national targets, with a focus on impact, results and the identification of areas which are off-track and bottlenecks, with actions to address those issues.

The Board encouraged donor governments to make multiyear contributions and release their contributions towards the 2016–2021 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework as soon as possible to fully fund the 2018–2019 UNAIDS budget of US\$ 484 million. During the meeting, an important funding announcement to UNAIDS was made by Australia, which confirmed it was pledging nearly US\$ 1 million in additional funds for HIV prevention in the Asia–Pacific region.

Board members expressed their support for the measures that UNAIDS is putting in place to address harassment in the workplace. The Board heard Mr Sidibé's commitment to lead change as he outlined the proactive actions under way at UNAIDS to prevent sexual harassment, unethical workplace behaviour and all forms of abuse.

"UNAIDS is taking concrete actions to ensure zero tolerance and zero impunity for harassment and abuse of authority," said Mr Sidibé. "I am committed to ensuring a workplace where everyone can work with respect and dignity."

Measures include a five-point plan to ensure that all forms of harassment and abuse of authority are identified early, dealt with swiftly and effectively with due process and to ensure that survivors and whistle-blowers are protected. UNAIDS has also set up an anonymous and confidential Integrity Hotline, released its new Gender Action Plan 2018–2023 and called for the establishment of an Independent Expert Panel on harassment to provide policy recommendations on how UNAIDS can improve its response and identify areas where reform is needed. The Board welcomed this request and has moved quickly to establish terms of reference for the independent expert panel. The panel will report to the Board to ensure that the oversight of the panel remains entirely independent.

The UNAIDS Staff Association made a statement to the Board to emphasise the genuine will and commitment of the staff to bring about positive change. The Staff Association also presented data from a recent staff survey in which 89% of staff responding said that their commitment to the goals of the organization is what motivates them to come to work each day.

During the meeting, the Board heard from several representatives of key populations on a variety of issues, including ensuring respect and dignity in the use of terminology, funding and support and meaningful consultation with civil society, respect for human rights and gender equality. In addition, concerns were raised about the specific and increased needs of displaced people in humanitarian settings and of people in prison settings.

Mr Sidibé invited the First Lady of Panama and UNAIDS Special Ambassador for AIDS in Latin America, Lorena Castillo de Varela, to present her groundbreaking work on zero discrimination to the Board.

On the final day of the meeting, the Board participated in a thematic session on ending tuberculosis (TB) and AIDS. Around 10 million new cases of TB occur every year and TB remains the leading cause of death among people living with HIV, accounting for one in every three AIDS-related deaths. The participants discussed the urgent need to scale up joint efforts to address the dual, intertwined epidemics of TB and HIV.

Representatives of United Nations Member States, international organizations, civil society and nongovernmental organizations attended the three-day meeting, which was chaired by Anna Wechsberg, Policy Director for the Department for International Development of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, with Cui Li, Vice-Minister of National Health and Family, China, serving as Vice-Chair and Algeria as Rapporteur.

The UNAIDS Executive Director's report to the Board and the Board's decisions can be found at <http://www.unaids.org/en/whoweare/pcb/42>.

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We are aware of the efforts undertaken by UNAIDS to strengthen policies to prevent and manage incidents of sexual exploitation and abuse and harassment. We commend UNAIDS and its Executive Director for this.

Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Ecuador, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Japan, Lichtenstein, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America

It is important to recognise all the staff at UNAIDS and in the Cosponsors, who come to work every day to end the HIV/AIDS epidemic.

Chair of the Programme Coordinating Board

We wish to reiterate our strong commitment to the mandate of UNAIDS towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030 and to working with the Secretariat and its staff to stay on mission and overcome the present challenges.

Austria, Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and Switzerland

The United States requires for its work in HIV/AIDS a strong and healthy UNAIDS. Why? Because the Secretariat must speak with authority on issues facing key populations and women around the globe to ensure host governments respond to the essential issues faced by the populations.

United States of America

We reaffirm our support to UNAIDS' important role in guiding the international AIDS response and will actively support the process designed to ensure an inclusive environment with zero tolerance for all forms of harassment at the UNAIDS Secretariat.

We would like to stress that the Joint Programme remains a unique model in the United Nations and is well set to adapt to the changes needed to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, in line with the United Nations development system reform, as the Joint Action Plan shows.

France, Germany, Liechtenstein and Monaco

UNAIDS has always been at the forefront of the United Nations system. We congratulate the UNAIDS Secretariat for its fast and active responses to all the challenges faced and encourage the Joint Programme to continue to act as a champion for gender equality and the empowerment of women across the United Nations system.

Latin America and Caribbean Group of Observers and Members of the UNAIDS PCB

For the African region, HIV/AIDS remains a major concern, with huge socioeconomic impact. We have made groundbreaking progress in the past decade and we need the momentum to be sustained towards the very ambitious but attainable goal of ending AIDS by 2030. As we move forward in this discussion we call on Board members, and in fact the whole world, not to lose sight of this very important aim of UNAIDS.

African Group

Being a Fast-Track country, we appreciate the positive impact that this organization is having on the ground and we therefore call on all stakeholders not to lose sight of the centrality of UNAIDS in the HIV/AIDS response.

Zimbabwe

Although we believe that everyone in this room is committed to achieve health for all, to win this epidemic will require more: we need to see your political leadership translated in human and financial resources at all levels, so we can really advance toward a consistent and sustainable HIV response.

Latin America and the Caribbean non-Governmental organizations

There is a concern that funding civil society is not supported appropriately, and that it represents a lack of vision of those who are committed to Ending AIDS. And we will not reach the people that are left behind, we will not be able to negotiate or do the advocacy work with governments for the latest prevention or treatment measures and we might not be able to enhance work on the structural barriers. By now we have all learned that for better business of HIV prevention and treatment it is important to invest in the communities.

Asia-Pacific nongovernmental organizations

This is the UNAIDS we know—in its strengths and in its shortcomings. We are a group of people committed to the AIDS response and the people we serve. We are proud of our achievements. We recognize the courage of our peers at all levels of the organization. Like any organization, there are areas where we can and must do better. But where we see problems, we identify solutions.

UNAIDS Staff Association

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UNAIDS

The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) leads and inspires the world to achieve its shared vision of zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. UNAIDS unites the efforts of 11 UN organizations—UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank—and works closely with global and national partners towards ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.