

PRESS RELEASE

UNAIDS Executive Director outlines her vision to the UNAIDS Board

GENEVA, 13 December 2019—Winnie Byanyima, speaking at the first meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) since her appointment as the UNAIDS Executive Director, has outlined her priorities for 2020. Noting that, “The global response to HIV and the Joint Programme provide one of the strongest examples of the value of multilateralism and global solidarity,” she added that, “The year 2020 provides us with an opportunity to reflect upon how the Joint Programme can work even better.”

The Executive Director of UNAIDS said that UNAIDS would step up its work in four areas: women and girls in Africa; defending the human rights of everyone; putting science, innovation and technology in the hands of people; and financing the global AIDS response.

Ms Byanyima noted the enormous progress that has been made in the AIDS response, but told the meeting that, despite major progress by some countries and some regions, the world will overall not reach the target of a 75% reduction in new HIV infections by the end of 2020. The 45th meeting of the PCB, which concluded yesterday, underlined the importance of countries increasing investment in HIV prevention, with no less than one quarter of HIV spending to be invested in prevention programmes.

During the meeting, the PCB also requested a review of the UNAIDS 2016–2021 Strategy, its implementation and the results obtained. The results of the review will be considered in a wide-ranging consultation and will be presented at the next meeting of the PCB, in June 2020, as part of the development of the next UNAIDS strategy.

“The process for the development of the next strategy will be deeply data-driven and consultative, involving UNAIDS staff, our Cosponsors, civil society, people living with and affected by HIV, young people, faith institutions, ministers of health, finance and gender and parliamentarians, scientists, donors and the private sector,” said Ms Byanyima.

In her [opening address](#) to the PCB, Ms Byanyima spoke about the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead in the less than 13 months until the end of 2020—when a set of HIV prevention, treatment and other targets should be reached—and the less than 11 years until 2030, the date by which the world has committed to end AIDS.

Ms Byanyima said that her priority would be UNAIDS’ greatest asset—its staff. “Much has been done, but there is still a long way to go. Work must continue to restore trust among staff and with external partners, and to change the culture so that UNAIDS never tolerates any kind of abuse of power, such as harassment, sexual misconduct or bullying, and UNAIDS encourages staff to feel safe and to speak up.”

The PCB, noting the recent Joint Inspection Unit review of the management and administration of UNAIDS, welcomed Ms Byanyima's commitment to establish an annual PCB agenda item to cover internal and external audits, ethics and other topics on accountability.

In paying tribute to Gunilla Carlsson, the UNAIDS Deputy Executive Director, Management and Governance, who will be leaving UNAIDS in early 2020, Ms Byanyima thanked her for guiding UNAIDS through the recent reputational crisis and facilitating the leadership transition. Wishing Ms Carlsson well in her future endeavours, she praised Ms Carlsson for driving forward critical reforms in management and governance, ensuring protection and support for staff members who have suffered from harassment and abuse of authority and leading the implementation of the UNAIDS Gender Action Plan and the Management Action Plan.

The PCB's nongovernmental organization delegation put forward a report on universal health coverage, highlighting the role of communities as critical partners and stakeholders in the design and implementation of universal health coverage, and a request was made by the PCB for UNAIDS to continue to support countries to ensure that comprehensive HIV services remain or become available and accessible under a universal health coverage programme.

The last day of the meeting was a full-day thematic session on reducing the impact of AIDS on children and youth, which raised alarm that progress in eliminating new HIV infections among infants and getting children from 0–14 years old living with HIV on effective HIV treatment and thriving has slowed worryingly. The PCB engaged with panels on the importance of youth leadership in shaping the HIV response towards holistic approaches.

Representatives of United Nations Member States, international organizations, civil society and nongovernmental organizations attended the three-day meeting, which was chaired by China, with the United States of America serving as Vice-Chair and Belarus as Rapporteur.

The PCB's decisions can be found at <https://www.unaids.org/en/whoweare/pcb/45>.

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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 as part of the Sustainable Development Goals. Learn more at unaids.org and connect with us on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and YouTube.