

**CCO Statement: 23<sup>rd</sup> UNAIDS Programme Coordination  
Board (PCB) meeting**

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Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of the Chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations, Dr Margaret Chan, Director-General of the World Health Organization, it is my pleasure to present the statement of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations.

The 23<sup>rd</sup> Programme Coordinating Board marks the end of a momentous year, both in terms of UNAIDS and of the HIV/AIDS response. This is a time to reflect on our many achievements under the extraordinary stewardship of Peter Piot and a time to prepare for the challenges that lie ahead in an increasing complex HIV/AIDS and development environment.

Let us first acknowledge the legacy of Peter Piot. Much has already been said and written about his contribution to the HIV/AIDS response, about his championing of United Nations reform and about his impact on the global development agenda. He has helped foster political commitment at the highest level including within each of the UNAIDS cosponsoring agencies. He has challenged us to do more, to focus on difficult and sensitive issues, to anchor our work in human rights, and to work together more efficiently and effectively. In an environment with constantly shifting agency, donor and country priorities, Peter has been an unrelenting advocate for investing in the global AIDS response. Peter was instrumental in creating a model for

UN-reform with coordination and harmonization through the UNAIDS Division of Labour - leveraging the human and financial resources of Cosponsors. He has supported bold, ambitious, and successful initiatives such as "3 by 5", to provide antiretroviral therapy in resource poor settings; "Unite for Children, Unite against AIDS" to put the missing face of children in the centre of the AIDS response; and the AIDS Strategy and Action Plan that promotes country responses that are prioritized, locally owned, informed by evidence, and fully costed.

His work has increased collaboration among different actors in both the public and private sectors. He has impacted the world of work by supporting actions to ensure greater employment opportunities for the young and for people living with HIV, contributing to reduction of stigma and discrimination and retention of jobs. Peter was instrumental in placing the issue of nutrition on the HIV agenda, particularly the nutritional response for people living with HIV and their families and in addressing the recent crisis of high food prices which jeopardized household food security and nutritional status of some of the most vulnerable people in the world. He has championed the linkages between HIV and sexual and reproductive health, where today, most people do not question the benefits anymore but rather seek guidance on how to operationalise those linkages.

UNAIDS is now a global and highly respected programme, with convening power that is able to forge partnerships across governments, civil society, people living with HIV, donors, the private sector, UN agencies and other key stakeholders. He has advocated for evidence-informed and tailored responses, calling for each country to "Know Your Epidemic, Know Your Response". The achievements of UNAIDS over the past 13 years have far exceeded expectations. Thank you Peter, we wish you all the best for the future.

Since the last regular meeting of the PCB in Chiang Mai there have been some key events and developments that have influenced the work of UNAIDS Cosponsors and the HIV/AIDS response.

We participated in two major events - the UN General Assembly High Level Meeting on HIV/AIDS in June and the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City in August. Both provided the UNAIDS family with an opportunity to take stock of the global epidemic and response. The High Level Meeting was remarkable in its willingness to address some of the most controversial issues we are facing in the response, notably a commitment to focus efforts on those most-at-risk - sex workers, drug users, men who have sex with men and prisoners - and those who are most vulnerable - women, children and the displaced.

The Mexico conference was an important time to promote and explore the concept of "combination prevention", to look at synergies between HIV specific programmes and health systems strengthening and to discuss what still needs to be done to expand treatment and care. UNAIDS supported the first-ever Summit of Ministers of Health and Education for Latin America and the Caribbean, hosted by the Government of Mexico, which resulted in a declaration calling for comprehensive sexuality education in schools as part of intensifying HIV prevention efforts in the region. We were also there to support the community of people living with HIV at their Living 2008 Summit.

We have been encouraged by the progress we have made. The UNAIDS family has significantly strengthened coordination and collaboration to address the gender dimension of HIV epidemics. This has included establishment of an external technical advisory group on women, girls, gender inequality and HIV, and formation of an interagency working group that is coordinating and promoting action by the Cosponsors, Secretariat and UNIFEM.

There is renewed interest in tackling HIV epidemics among men who have sex with men, with the development of a coherent programme of work across the UNAIDS family and with key partners. To strengthen responses to HIV among men who have sex with men and transgender persons, an interagency coordination group has developed an enhanced UNAIDS Action Framework on HIV, Universal Access, Men Who have Sex with Men and Transgender People.

Our contribution to the International Task Team on HIV-related Travel Restrictions promises to significantly impact on the international policies and practices that continue to discriminate against people living with HIV.

The "3 by 5" target of having three million people on antiretroviral therapy in low- and middle-income countries was achieved in 2007. Programmes for the prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV have increased service coverage to 33%, still unacceptably low but a significant improvement. Cosponsors have worked together to advocate for countries to deliver HIV services to populations in humanitarian crises. The HIV response to these vulnerable groups has continued to improve through better coordination and more funding in these settings.

We have intensified and coordinated efforts in supporting countries to develop evidence-based and comprehensive national HIV strategies and costed operational plans. Our investment in supporting countries to apply for Global Fund grants resulted in increasing rates of success.

Many challenges still exist. The renewed enthusiasm around "combination prevention" needs to be translated into effective programmes in countries. Already existing effective prevention strategies, such as condom programming and harm reduction need to be taken to scale. Treatment scale-up, while impressive in numbers, is patchy with regard to populations covered, such as refugees, drug users, rural populations, children and pregnant women in need of therapy for their own health. The UNAIDS family still needs to do more to advocate for national governments to include most-at-risk and vulnerable populations, such as refugees, sex workers, drug users and men who have sex with men, in their strategic plans and funding proposals. The global economic crisis and competing health and development priorities risk undermining the many gains we have made in recent years. We need to present a strong case, grounded in evidence, as to why we must sustain and expand investments in the HIV response.

The UNAIDS family must understand the changing epidemic, fully exploit new opportunities, approaches and technologies, and be responsive to the changing environment. The Second Independent Evaluation should help guide us in our work. These dynamics need to be captured as we develop the Unified Budget and Workplan for the next biennium 2010-2011, to be aligned with the UNAIDS Strategic Framework and five strategic directions. We look forward to presenting the results at the next meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board in June 2009.

Finally, we must acknowledge and warmly welcome the appointment of Michel Sidibe as the new UNAIDS Executive Director. We have worked closely with Michel in the past and appreciate the personal and professional attributes he brings to the position. We are fully committed to work with him over the coming months and years to build upon the remarkable legacy of Peter Piot.