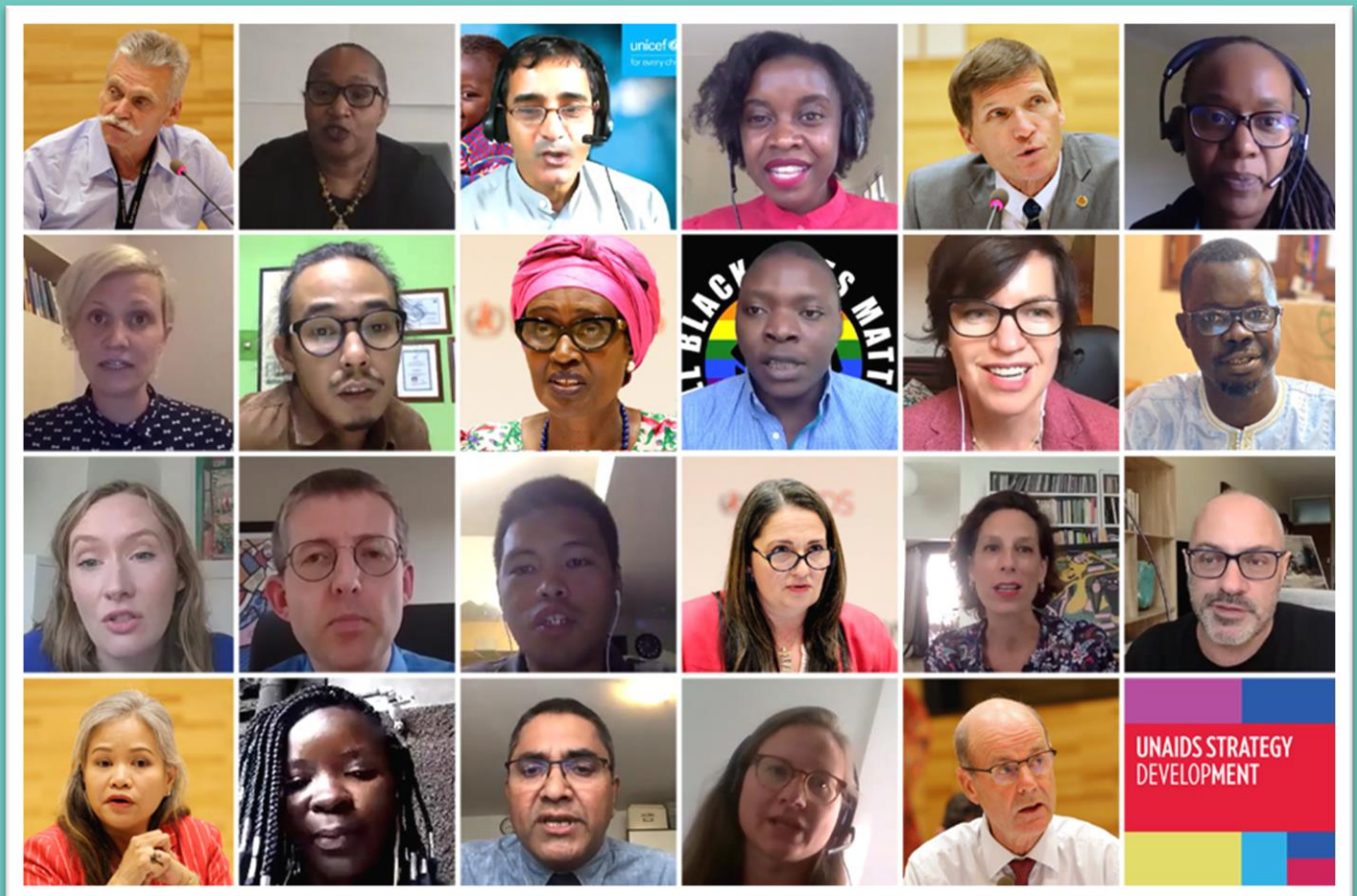


# Setting the path for the next UNAIDS Global AIDS Strategy



Remarks delivered by UNAIDS Executive Director, Winnie Byanyima,  
at the opening of the UNAIDS multistakeholder consultation on the next Global AIDS  
Strategy, 16 September 2020

Dear Excellencies, Colleagues & Friends,

It is an honour to welcome you to this multistakeholder consultation on the next UNAIDS Global AIDS Strategy.

### ***How the world has changed since our current strategy was adopted***

I want to begin by highlighting how our world has changed since the last UNAIDS strategy was adopted by the PCB in 2015, and the implications for our next strategy.

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, multilateralism has been increasingly questioned. It cannot be assumed that solidarity in the global AIDS response will be maintained - we must work at it. The pace of progress has plateaued or even been scaled back in some places. New HIV infections have been reduced in some regions, which is good news, but the HIV epidemics continue to grow in others. We will miss the 2020 targets that were at the heart of the current strategy. There are expectations that UNAIDS will advance a visionary new global AIDS strategy, building on the key pillars of the current Strategy, that will reinvigorate progress, a sense of urgency, and strengthen global solidarity in the global AIDS response.

Inequality has been increasing, reaching an alarming extent. As recently highlighted by the UN Secretary-General, overlapping inequalities based on gender, income, race, age, ethnicity, disability, immigration status or sexual orientation are now acute obstacles to reaching the Sustainable Development Goals, including the goal of ending AIDS by 2030. These inequalities are key drivers of the HIV epidemic, as the majority of new HIV infections are now among key populations and their partners.

Our strategic, winning multisectoral, all-of-government, all-of-society approach pioneered by the HIV response, is getting weaker today than it was before. HIV is falling off the political agendas of many governments, donors, and some international organizations.

Many national HIV responses are now lacking the strong, multisectoral engagement and high-level political leadership that is required to accelerate the urgent progress that we need. Civil society and in particular key populations, whose leadership and service capacity are key to ending AIDS, are increasingly criminalized, marginalized, and some are even under constant attack.

When the previous UNAIDS Strategy was adopted, global resources for HIV had been increasing almost every year for over a decade. But since 2017 international funding for HIV has plateaued, and the funding gap continues to widen. Even the increase in domestic resources for HIV has not been sustained in recent years. National HIV responses in low-income countries still heavily rely on external funding. Many middle-income countries have struggled to transition to domestically financed responses. Important components of HIV programmes that depend heavily on external funding, such as those focused on key populations, are at particular risk.

And now we are dealing with the COVID-19 pandemic, which threatens to overwhelm health system capacities, which is straining economies, public budgets, and creating life-threatening disruptions to health and HIV services. We cannot allow the hard-fought gains made in the HIV response to be reversed.

We are developing this strategy in a complex, a very uncertain period. With your engagement and inputs, we are reflecting on these changes, which are forcing us to rethink how to ensure the next strategy remains visionary, ambitious, and evidence-based. Building on the pillars of the current Strategy, we have a solid foundation. But the challenge of the future is a serious one for us.

### ***Comprehensive review of our current strategy***

In recent months, UNAIDS has conducted the most extensive public engagement in the history of the Joint Programme. I am proud of that. We reviewed our current strategy and solicited extensive inputs on our next strategy. We consulted with hundreds of stakeholders in interviews and focus group discussions. We received input from over 8,000 online respondents from 163 countries in 16 languages. Our evidence review raises critical, data-driven questions about what is working and not working, highlights ways in which our next strategy needs to deliver more urgent progress, granularity, and prioritization to get the AIDS response back on track towards our goal of 2030.

### ***Key findings guiding our thinking on parameters for the next strategy***

We are still in the process of developing the framework and reaffirming the key result areas for the next strategy. Let me share with you some of the key findings that are guiding our thinking on the parameters for the next strategy.

There is overwhelming expectation and support that the next strategy will be a strategy for the entire global AIDS response. This is why we are explicitly referring to this as the new UNAIDS Global AIDS Strategy that includes global targets and provides direction and policy guidance for all countries, all partners, and populations for everyone to be on board.

Today will not present options for developing the new strategy, as this decision will be made by the PCB in October. However, at the last meeting of the PCB and through the consultation process, we have noted extensive support for Option 2, in which we do not reopen the strategy on key principles and policies, but make evidence-based enhancements and adjustments to improve the implementation of the next strategy and accelerate progress in critical areas that are lagging behind, with revised targets and resource-needs estimates for 2025.

We are looking at the how, not the what, which is already well reflected in the current strategy.

The policies, approaches, and principles in the current strategy are based on data, evidence, and sound policy and supported by critical solidarity and consensus that continue to be relevant to the next strategy. I repeat that we do not plan to reopen discussions on the issues that could take us back. Instead, we want to focus on how to make progress across the areas and issues where we are already off-track and we need to advance.

While the overall focus of the current strategy is sound, there needs to be more attention as to how we are going to overcome the obstacles that we continue to face in all aspects of the response. The next strategy also needs to drive more urgent action. It should ensure that countries and partners cannot pick and choose what they want to implement, at the risk of neglecting the most critical and most needed, evidence-based interventions that will have the greatest and most urgent impact.

We have heard that the next strategy needs to be more integrated and more holistic. We need to overcome unhealthy tensions between prevention and treatment, and between public health versus human rights. These are not choices. These are not trade-offs. The strategy must remain people-centered, with more detailed and concrete targets for urgent action across the continuum of prevention, testing, treatment and support, human rights, and enabling environment.

Finally, for this strategy to protect and advance the gains in the AIDS response, we need to start planning how the strategy will be fully funded. In October we will complete detailed resource needs estimation up to the end of 2025. This strategy must be a mechanism to secure adequate resources for the global AIDS response. Because without the resources we need, millions of lives will continue to be lost. While the world's attention is on global health and COVID-19, we have a short window of opportunity to ensure the next chapter of the global AIDS response is fully funded.

### ***Findings of the Independent Evaluation***

As background for this meeting, you have received an independent evaluation of the UN system's response to AIDS and our interim management response to it. Thank you for suggesting that the evaluation and the management response be presented today, although it will not be the focus of today's consultation. We will have another moment to pay attention to the evaluation's findings.

I welcome the evaluation's finding that the current UNAIDS Strategy, which articulates the global AIDS response, is highly relevant because it describes the UNAIDS 'upstream' role within the global response, and is based on evidence and extensive input from the key stakeholders. At the next CCO meeting in November, I will discuss the implications of the evaluation with the cosponsors, who have already contributed to the interim management response. I also look forward to discussing the evaluation and the management response at the PCB meeting in December. Following the finalization of the new strategy, we will develop our next Results,

Resource Allocation and Accountability Framework through a consultative process to optimise the Joint Programme support to the implementation of the new strategy.

## **Conclusion**

Today is an important milestone in the development of UNAIDS next strategy, but we are only half-way there in this process. But I am proud of what the team has done up to this point and thank you for your inputs. There are a number of additional engagements coming up in the following weeks, including the briefing for the PCB members and observers in October, the pre-meetings in the lead up to the 47th PCB meeting in December, and the discussions on the annotated outline of the Strategy at the PCB meeting itself. We will continue to reflect on the extensive evidence and feedback we have received in recent months and the input you will provide today. But a lot of the heavy lifting on the content of the next strategy is still ahead of us. There are tough questions and choices we have to make.

This is why, during today's group sessions, we will focus on 12 priority issues that warrant a deeper discussion with stakeholders. This is not an exhaustive list, and there will be more consultations on specific issues and priorities through focus groups and consultations with the PCB. Please use this opportunity to provide your feedback in the group work. Even if you do not get a chance to make a statement in plenary, your inputs and feedback are important. Please do not hesitate to reach out directly to our Strategy Team if there are specific issues you want to raise or feedback you want to provide beyond today's meeting. We are open and we are listening.

Extensive stakeholder engagement, feedback, and support are key strengths of this process, and what will make the next UNAIDS strategy truly co-owned by the range of stakeholders in the global AIDS response.

I want to thank you so much for your participation.

Thank you.

*(END)*