



UNAIDS PCB Bureau Meeting

DATE: Monday, 21 September 2020

TIME: 16:00-18:00 (Geneva time)

PARTICIPANTS

PCB Bureau: Ms Julia Martin, Ms Mamadi Yilla, Ms Tracy Carson, and Ms Deana Jordan Sullivan (United States of America: representing the Chair); Ms Xungileni Martha Galukeni Chitundu (Namibia: representing the Vice-chair); Mr Ludo Bok (representing the CCO Chair, UNDP) and Mr Jonathan Gunthorp and Mr Andrew Spieldenner (representing the NGO Delegation)

Secretariat: Mr Morten Ussing, Director, Governance and Multilateral Affairs, UNAIDS and Ms Samia Lounnas, Senior Advisor, Governance and Multilateral Affairs, UNAIDS

Presenters: Ms. Shannon Hader, Deputy Executive Director, Programme, UNAIDS; Mr. Carlos Facciolla Passarelli, Senior Adviser, Access to Medicines, UNAIDS; Mr. Peter Ghys, Director, SID, UNAIDS; Ms. Meg Doherty, Director, Global HIV, Hepatitis, and Sexually Transmitted Infections Programmes, WHO; Mr. Boniface Dongmo Nguimfack, Technical Officer, WHO; Mr. Marco Antonio De Avila Vitoria, Head, Treatment, Care and Service Delivery, Global HIV, Hepatitis, and Sexually Transmitted Infections Programmes, WHO; Mr. Lorenzo Witherspoon, Senior Procurement & Supply Chain Management Advisory, WHO; Mr. Christophe Rerat, Programme Manager for Essential Medicines and Health Product, WHO; and Ms. Lisa Hedman, Group Lead, Medicines and health products for emerging markets, WHO

Excused: Dr. Sadre Alam (India: representing the Rapporteur),

MEETING DRAFT AGENDA

1. Update on ARV stock-outs
2. Update on agenda items for the 47th PCB meeting (15-18 December 2020)
3. Modalities and procedures for the 47th PCB meeting
4. AOB

SUMMARY

The Chair welcomed the participants to the meeting and thanked them for joining. Before moving to the adoption of the agenda, the Chair noted that there was an item to be discussed under Any Other Business. As one participant had to leave early, the Chair requested that the Bureau consider the item immediately following the update on ARV stock-outs. The Bureau agreed and adopted the agenda.

1. Update on ARV Stock-outs

The Chair recalled the request from the NGO Delegation at the previous PCB Bureau meeting ([9 July 2020](#)) for an update on ARV stock-outs due to COVID-19 and thanked the Delegation for raising this important concern. In advance of the meeting, the PCB Bureau received a short paper on this situation and the Joint Programme's activities to ensure access to medication during COVID-19. The Chair welcomed the presenters from the Joint Programme to provide the update and respond to any questions the Bureau may have:

Carlos Facciolla Passarelli provided a brief overview of the background paper sent in advance of the meeting. The background document provides an overview of the work of the Joint Programme, both individually and collectively, regarding potential disruption of HIV treatment in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, including ARV stockouts. The paper also provides contextualization of the data presented by the WHO at the International AIDS Conference and surveys undertaken by the Joint Programme on service disruption.

Peter Ghys presented on UNAIDS' efforts to monitor and track data on HIV-related service disruption due to COVID with cosponsors, WHO and UNICEF. The first set of data from the period January to June had recently been analysed and revealed limited disruption of HIV services. Twenty-three (23) countries were able to report on ARV disruption for the full period. Among those countries, only three reported disruption. The rest reported minimal or no disruption. The Secretariat praised countries for their significant efforts to minimize disruption and to take innovative approaches to support service delivery, including leveraging civil society.

Data from forty-six (46) countries on new initiations of treatment was also collected and analysed. Thirty-seven (37) of these were found to have initiated fewer people on treatment than they had during the same time period in 2019. Therefore, while disruption of services for people already on treatment was less extensive than feared, there was a concerning reduction in new initiations on treatment. The Secretariat noted that this was also likely linked to a reduction in people getting tested for HIV.

Meg Doherty provided an update on key trends following the publications of WHO's survey in July 2020. In its survey published in July, the WHO found that 73 countries were experiencing a risk of ARV stock-outs with 26 countries having a critically low stock of three-or-fewer months. Since July, WHO has focused their work on the 26 countries, including urgently supplying ARVs to 15 countries. Over the past couple of months, the situation in most countries has stabilized and there have been no additional requests for emergency supplies. WHO is continuing to monitor and support countries with remaining issues of low stock.

Ms Doherty reiterated the positive steps taken by countries to move into telemedicine and to use innovative measures to ensure service delivery, including delivery by courier and partnerships with civil society.

Christophe Rerat noted that efforts were focused on increasing regional capacity, fast tracking approval of products from alternative sources, and trade association advocacy. Logistics of medicine delivery was a key concern during COVID-19, and WHO was monitoring demand spikes and export restrictions. They are developing a list for expedited customs and procurement, and have partnered with WFP to find alternatives in procurement. Regarding HIV-specific treatment concerns, the WHO was working closely with PEPFAR to identify alternatives for second-line treatment (which had been at-risk) and was engaged in discussions with 7 key countries in the African region.

The PCB Bureau thanked the presenters for their comprehensive update and welcomed the positive progress to minimize service disruption. Members recognized the extensive collaborative efforts amongst partners to ensure delivery of medicines both to and within countries, and innovations in alternative treatment and service delivery. Members noted with concern the reduced testing for HIV and a subsequent downward trajectory of new initiations on treatment. A member also requested clarification on the collection of data regarding civil society involvement in minimizing service disruption.

Presenters responded to the request for clarification noting that civil society had played an instrumental role in supporting multimonth dispensing and delivery of ARVs within communities as well as supporting regional coordination. Throughout COVID, numerous examples have been raised of how communities have created innovative solutions to tackle these unique challenges. A UNAIDS Secretariat survey from the spring indicated that key priorities for people living with HIV were access to services and medicine. Civil society is playing a crucial role in minimizing these disruptions and support for facilitating this role will be important moving forward, including in ensuring these organizations are recognized as essential services and helping them to mobilize personal protective equipment (PPE). Work is ongoing with community partners, including GNP+ and their partners, to get real time data from the community perspective.

Presenters reiterated the need for continued monitoring of this situation, particularly given the fluidity of COVID-19 and its potential to impact global supply chain management as well as in-country service delivery.

2. AOB: Letter sent to PCB Chair

The PCB Chair noted that six countries had written letters to both the Chair and the UNAIDS Executive Director to raise concerns on the recent UNAIDS publication, *Rights in a pandemic – Lockdowns, rights and lessons from HIV in the early response to COVID-19*. With their permission, the Chair brought the matter to the PCB Bureau. The letter outlines that the report stretches beyond UNAIDS' mandate. The Member States in question requested that the Chair, as appropriate, raise these concerns with the PCB, including the PCB Bureau. The Chair noted that discussions were ongoing between the aforementioned countries and the UNAIDS Executive Director.

Bureau members requested the Chair to continue consulting with the countries and provide an appropriate way forward for consideration by the Bureau.

3. Update on agenda items for the 47th PCB meeting (15-18 December 2020)

The Chair recalled that a tentative agenda for the 47th PCB meeting has been approved at the PCB Bureau meeting on 9 July 2020. Prior to the Secretariat providing an update on these agenda items, the Chair raised two requests to amend the agenda item.

The UNAIDS Executive Director requested that the PCB Bureau consider the inclusion of an additional agenda item on COVID-19. Given the urgency of the situation, the Executive Director believes it to be of the utmost important to provide the PCB with an update on the Joint Programme activities in light of COVID-19.

The UNAIDS Staff Association also sent in a request to the UNAIDS Executive Director and the PCB Chair to exceptionally speak at the 47th PCB meeting given the discussion on the UNAIDS Strategy. Legal Counsel had advised that in order for the Staff Association to speak, an agenda item would need to be added for this specific purpose.

The Secretariat provided the following update on PCB agenda items:

Focal points had developed and presented outlines to the Deputy Executive Directors for feedback. These outlines had now been shared with cosponsors for comment. The Secretariat reminded the Bureau that focal points would present their papers to the PCB Bureau at its next meeting.

The report of the forty-sixth meeting: This report, drafted by an external report writer, was shared with the PCB Chair for clearance. The summary report of the 46th PCB meeting includes both the statements delivered in plenary and those submitted via the secure platform in its traditional anonymized format.

Report by the NGO Representative: The report by the NGO Delegation will focus on the work of the NGO Delegation over the past 25 years of UNAIDS governance. The NGO Delegation noted that progress on the report is ongoing.

Follow-up to the thematic segment from the 45th Programme Coordinating Board meeting: The Secretariat reminded the Bureau that this follow-up was postponed from the 46th PCB meeting. This report is a summation of the presentations and discussions of the 45th PCB thematic segment on reducing the impact of AIDS on children and youth. The PCB Bureau will receive the proposed decision points for their review.

Report of the Task Team on Community-led AIDS Responses: Further to the last meeting of the PCB Bureau, the PCB took the intersessional decision to move forward with the establishment of the Task Team on the basis of existing nominations. The Task Team will shortly have their first meeting.

Evaluation and UNAIDS Strategy beyond 2021: Given the interlinkages between these two items, their update was presented concurrently. The Multistakeholder Consultation on the next UNAIDS Strategy took place on Wednesday, 16 September 2020. In addition to a live stream,

around 200 participants were directly engaged in the consultation. In advance of this meeting, the Evidence Review of the current UNAIDS Strategy was sent to all participants along with the Independent Evaluation of the UN System Response to AIDS 2016-2019 and its accompanying interim management response. As agreed in the decision points from the 46th PCB meeting, further to the consultation, a briefing will be held with PCB participants in early October. This briefing will be the basis for the intersessional decision of the PCB on the options for the upcoming Strategy.

Report of the PCB Working Group on the JIU Recommendations: The Chair provided a brief update on the progress of the PCB Working Group. The Group met in June for its second meeting. The summary of this meeting is posted on the UNAIDS website. The Working Group met for its third meeting in September. The Group has reviewed all the recommendations and is reaching consensus. An additional meeting of the Working Group is planned in advance of the PCB Briefing to be held on the Working Group in October.

Next PCB meetings: This annual paper lays out the dates for upcoming PCB meetings and the proposed topics for the upcoming year's thematic segments. The Secretariat recalled that the theme originally previewed for the 47th PCB meeting, *What does the regional and country-level data tell us, are we listening, and how can we better leverage that data and related technology to meet our 2020 and 2030 goals?*, was postponed to 2021. A call for an additional theme went out at the beginning of September with a reminder sent recently. As of the meeting, no submissions had been received.

The PCB Bureau thanked the Secretariat for the update. Members noted their support for both requests to add agenda items, however, they expressed concern for the timing of the meeting given the dense agenda. The Bureau discussed items that the PCB Chair agreed to provide a timewise agenda for the Bureau to approve, taking into considerations these concerns.

4. Modalities and Procedures for the 47th PCB meeting:

The Chair recognized the continuous evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and recent rates of infection increase worldwide. While difficult to predict the situation in December, the Chair reiterated the importance of making a decision regarding the modalities and the procedures for the 47th PCB meeting to allow for timely preparation and the sending of invitations.

All available options were outlined for discussion: fully in-person; hybrid meeting with both in-person and virtual preparation; and a fully virtual meeting. The Chair noted a few considerations. In the event of an in-person or hybrid meeting, a new location for the meeting would need to be identified as the WHO EB is being used for WHO daily briefings and is not big enough to accommodate necessary social distancing measures. In the event of a hybrid meeting, careful consideration will be needed to ensure that all participation is equal. Any in-person meeting would also need to follow COVID-19 measures, which could include contact tracing, masking and social distance guidelines.

Bureau members stated the importance of all stakeholders having equal access to the meeting. Given the evolution of travel restrictions and quarantine measures, Bureau members were in consensus support to propose a fully virtual meeting to the wider PCB.

On this basis, the Chair proposed that the Bureau members discuss modalities and procedures from the 46th PCB meeting. The Chair reminded the members of key modalities: the Interprefy platform, pre-meetings on agenda items, pre-recorded presentations, and pre-submitted statements. The Chair also proposed that the Bureau consider adding an additional consultation on all proposed decision points in advance of the meeting.

Bureau members noted the success of many of the modalities and procedures from the 46th meeting, in particular the pre-meetings. Though these meetings required additional time for participants, it was agreed that they were useful in facilitating preparation for the 46th PCB meeting. Members expressed their support for a separate discussion on all proposed decision points to support members' preparation. They noted the usefulness of holding such a discussion following the pre-meetings to allow for constituencies to consult with one another. The Bureau considered options for streamlining the presentations.

Members recognized with regret that the shortened time frame often limited the ability of observers to speak. In addition, while recognizing the benefit of the Interprefy platform, members noted that other UN agencies, including WHO, had moved to the Zoom platform. Zoom has significantly increased their security measures in recent months and accommodates interpretation. Members requested that the Secretariat explore options to use both Zoom and Interprefy.

On the basis of these discussions, the PCB Chair will put forth an intersessional paper laying out these proposals for review and comment by the PCB Bureau.

5. AOB

No other issues were raised.

Conclusion

The Chair noted that PCB Bureau members should expect the following documents for their review:

- the draft decisions for the follow-up to the thematic segment on reducing the impact of HIV on children and youth;
- a revised annotated and timewise agenda with the additional items discussed today;
- a draft intersessional paper on modalities and procedures.

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