

NEXT PCB MEETINGS

Additional documents for this item: *none*

Action required at this meeting—the Programme Coordinating Board is invited to:

See draft Decision Points in paragraph 9 below:

9. The PCB is invited to:

- *Agree that the themes for the 50th and 51st Programme Coordinating Board thematic segments will be:*
 - a) *HIV and men, in all their diversity, how can we get our responses back on track?*
 - b) *Positive Learning: harnessing the power of education to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination and empower young people living with HIV;*
- *Request the Programme Coordinating Board Bureau to take appropriate and timely steps to ensure that due process is followed in the call for themes for the 52nd and 53rd Programme Coordinating Board meetings;*
- *Agree on the dates for the 54th (25–27 June 2024) and the 55th (10–12 December 2024) meetings of the Programme Coordinating Board.*

Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions: *none*

THEMES FOR THE 49TH AND 50TH PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD MEETINGS

1. The UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) decided at its 20th meeting in June 2007 that future Board meetings will consist of a decision-making segment and a thematic segment (ref. PCB 20/rec.10a). Further to this decision, the 21st meeting of the PCB in December 2007 discussed the modalities for the identification of themes and agreed on a process whereby; *“the theme for the Programme Coordinating Board thematic segments should be decided by the Board upon recommendation of the Programme Coordinating Board Bureau. This recommendation should be based upon a call for proposals directed to all PCB constituencies and possibly other key actors...”* (ref. UNAIDS/PCB (21)/07.5 para.9).
2. The PCB also agreed that proposed themes should be considered on the basis of four criteria: broad relevance, responsiveness, focus, and scope for action. At its 47th meeting in December 2020, the Board requested the PCB Bureau to take appropriate and timely steps to ensure that due process is followed in the call for themes for the 50th and 51st PCB meetings (ref. PCB 47/ dec.15.3).

PROCESS OF SELECTION OF THEMES FOR THE 48th AND 49th BOARD MEETINGS

3. Accordingly, the PCB Bureau sent out a call to all Board Members in July 2021 inviting proposals for themes for the 50th and 51st PCB meetings to be held in June and December 2022.
4. At its meeting on 4 November 2021, the Bureau considered the 11 proposals (listed below) that were submitted, giving due consideration to criteria in paragraph 1 above, as well as other factors, including: the level and diversity of support; urgency of the issue; whether the issue was being considered elsewhere; inclusion of the theme as a sub-issue under a broader or related theme; and, the suitability of the theme to be addressed by the Board at a particular time.
 - **Proposal 1:** HIV and men, in all their diversity, how can we get our responses back on track?
 - **Proposal 2:** Positive learning: harnessing the power of education to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination and empower young people living with HIV
 - **Proposal 3:** HIV and primary health care
 - **Proposal 4:** Innovative use of technology for HIV prevention and care
 - **Proposal 5:** CSOs/NGOs and HIV for 2030—involvement in care and treatment practices
 - **Proposal 6:** Alternative approaches to HIV care and treatment services
 - **Proposal 7:** Sustain an effective AIDS response in the COVID-19 pandemic, lessons learned and good practice
 - **Proposal 8:** Impact of Covid-19 on the accessibility of mental health services for people living with HIV
 - **Proposal 9:** HIV, adolescents and youth
 - **Proposal 10:** Halving HIV among people who inject drugs
 - **Proposal 11:** Combination prevention strategy
5. The PCB Bureau acknowledged the quality and timeliness of the proposals, and proposed to incorporate elements of the proposed theme of *Innovative use of technology for HIV prevention and care* into the proposed theme of *HIV and men, in all their*

diversity, how can we get our responses back on track? The combined proposal is available in Annex 1. The Bureau also proposed to incorporate elements of the proposed theme of *HIV, adolescents and youth* into the theme of *Positive learning: harnessing the power of education to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination and empower young people living with HIV*. The combined proposal is available in Annex 2.

6. The Bureau proposed the combined theme, *HIV and men, in all their diversity, how can we get our responses back on track?* for the thematic segment of the 50th PCB meeting in June 2022, and the combined proposal, *Positive learning: harnessing the power of education to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination and empower young people living with HIV* for the thematic segment of the 51st PCB meeting in December 2022.
7. Given that the 52nd and 53rd meetings of the PCB are scheduled respectively for June and December 2023, the PCB is invited to:
 - *request* the Bureau to take appropriate and timely steps to ensure that due process is followed in the call for themes for the 52nd and 53rd Programme meetings.

DATES FOR THE NEXT PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD MEETINGS

8. The PCB is invited to agree to the following dates for the Board meetings:
 - 54th meeting: 25th, 26th, and 27th June, 2024
 - 55th meeting: 10th, 11th and 12th December, 2024

DRAFT DECISION POINTS:

9. The PCB is invited to:
 - *agree* that the themes for the 50th and 51st PCB thematic segments will be:
 - a) *HIV and men, in all their diversity, how can we get our responses back on track?*
 - b) *Positive learning: harnessing the power of education to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination and empower young people living with HIV;*
 - *request* the PCB Bureau to take appropriate and timely steps to ensure that due process is followed in the call for themes for the 52nd and 53rd PCB meetings; and
 - *agree* on the dates for the 54th (25–27 June 2024) and the 55th (10–12 December 2024) meetings of the PCB.

[Annexes follow]

Annex 1. Proposed theme for the 50th Programme Coordinating Board meeting (June 2022)

Theme proposed by: Guyana and WHO (combined proposal)

Title: HIV and men, in all their diversity, how can we get our responses back on track?

Broad relevance: what is the relevance of the theme to the global AIDS response?

Forty years since the first description of cases of what came to be known as AIDS, there is growing recognition that engaging men will be key to reaching the global UNAIDS Fast-Track targets of 95–95–95 by the end of 2030. The most recent global HIV data through 2020 show that progress towards the targets for men lags behind (82–83–91, compared with 88–90–91 for women). The gap in the treatment cascade is worse, with 82% of men knowing their HIV status, but with only 68% of those men receiving antiretroviral therapy and only 62% achieving viral suppression. The 2017 UNAIDS publication *Blind spot: Reaching out to men and boys* and recent guidance from the WHO highlights gender differences in HIV outcomes, including the substantial gap in reaching men with HIV testing services. Several recent studies show that, compared with women, men tend to present with more advanced HIV disease and associated higher mortality risk, are less likely to start antiretroviral therapy and are less likely to be retained in care. The relevance and use of innovative approaches, including digital approaches for HIV prevention and care, in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic is significant.

Responsiveness: how is the theme responsive to the interests, concerns and information needs of a broad range of actors in the global AIDS response?

The central theme for the Global AIDS Strategy 2021–2026 is ending inequalities and ending AIDS. There are still substantial information gaps on the extent of the inequality in HIV service access and use for men in all their diversity, as well as a need to better understand ways to reach and engage men in their diversity. Antiretroviral therapy coverage and viral suppression in Africa among gay men and other men who have sex with men remains much lower than required to achieve the global AIDS targets. In addition to the challenge of increasing access to HIV services among men in general, there is a need for more evidence to guide interventions to improve uptake and outcomes of HIV services for gay men and other men who have sex with men in low-income and middle-income settings. This theme is therefore in line with the global strategic response on AIDS and will help bridge the information gaps for enhancing uptake of HIV services for men, while also bridging the gender gaps in the 95–95–95 targets. In light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the barriers to uptake of HIV interventions, there is an opportunity to explore further how these challenges can be addressed innovatively, including through digital approaches.

Focus: how can consideration of the theme be focused to allow for in-depth consideration in one day?

An overview of what is currently known, and a review of the evidence and current gaps would set the scene. Various approaches, promising practices and community examples of engaging men in their diversity from a human rights and gender perspective would be explored. Discussions on strategies to engage men and improve their uptake of HIV services and recommendations on global, country and country actions would be explored. An objective-based theme is proposed, based on:

- a review current evidence and gaps;
- identifying approaches, including innovative digital interventions, promising practices and community examples of engaging men in their diversity;

- discussion of strategies to engage men and improve their uptake of HIV services, and exploration of recommendations on global, country and country actions; and
- suggested recommendations and next steps

Scope for action: how does the theme address possible and necessary action to be undertaken in the response to AIDS, rather than purely theoretical or academic issues?

In order to enhance uptake of services, reduce inequalities and engage men more effectively, this theme will explore a number of key scopes and actions that would be country- and community-focused, including on policy development and addressing gender norms and masculinities. Successful and verified best practices in service delivery approaches, community-based interventions and innovative use of digital approaches to engage men living with and affected by HIV and in all their diversity will be highlighted, promoted and shared with a view to adaptation and wider adoption. Gaps in current knowledge on the best approaches on engaging men in their diversity would be addressed.

Annex 2. Proposed theme for the 51st Programme Coordinating Board meeting (December 2022)

Theme proposed by: Thailand and UNESCO (combined proposal)

Title: Positive learning: harnessing the power of education to end HIV-related stigma and discrimination, empower young people and provide a comprehensive HIV response

Broad relevance: what is the relevance of the theme to the global AIDS response?

Young people are the heart and the future of the global a response. Yet the data show that young people continue to be left behind. Globally, HIV still disproportionately impacts young people, who represent 16% of the global population, but account for approximately 28% of all new HIV infections. Young people's knowledge and awareness of HIV and their access to and use of essential HIV-related services remain unacceptably low, and condom use is on the decline.

An estimated 3.4 million young people (aged 15–24 years) were living with HIV in 2020. The proportion of young people living with HIV who know their HIV status is much lower than for their adult counterparts. Adolescents living with HIV also have lower viral suppression rates compared to adults and younger children. Among the estimated 940 000 adolescents (aged 10-19 years) living with HIV globally in 2020, only 54% were receiving antiretroviral treatment.

In eastern and southern Africa, the region most affected by HIV, only 25% of adolescent girls and 17% of adolescent boys (aged 15–19 years) have been tested for HIV in the previous 12 months and received the result of their most recent test. Testing rates in western and central Africa and South Asia are even lower. If current trends continue, hundreds of thousands more young people will acquire HIV in the coming years, many of them unaware of their HIV status and missing out on life-saving treatment.

The education sector has a key, though often overlooked, role to play in meeting the 2030 goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat. Whether through the formal or nonformal education sector, in-school or out-of-school programmes, we must harness the full power of the education sector in the AIDS response. This means going beyond programmes that focus exclusively on HIV prevention which do not address the holistic needs and realities of young people, and which sometimes convey messages about people living with HIV and key populations that can reinforce rather than reduce stigma and discrimination. By embracing quality comprehensive sexuality education, countries can equip adolescents and young people with the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values that will empower them to realize their health, well-being and dignity; develop respectful social and sexual relationships; consider how their choices affect their own well-being and that of others; and understand and ensure the protection of their rights throughout their lives.

Responsiveness: how is the theme responsive to the interests, concerns and information needs of a broad range of actors in the global AIDS response?

Notably through the leadership of young people living with HIV, young key populations and young women, young people have been at the helm of a new wave of activism that is challenging us to go further in achieving a truly multisectoral AIDS response. The Joint Youth Statement on the 2021 Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS, which emerged from the recent UN High-Level Meeting, praised the Political Declaration's commitments to education and employment. But the statement also called on the global community to go

further in its commitment to comprehensive sexuality education, which it recognized as “key for reducing HIV and key population-related stigma and discrimination; reducing and ending sexual and gender-based violence, and reducing inequalities.”

Indeed, quality education—both in- and out-of-school—can have a transformative impact. It supports young people to fulfil their right to education in a safe, supportive and enabling learning environment, as well as:

- provides young people living with HIV with access to the knowledge and skills they need to manage living with HIV, advocate for their health and well-being, know their rights and build healthy and gender-equitable relationships;
- Sensitizes school managers, teachers, staff, students and the broader school community (parents/caregivers) about the rights of learners living with HIV, including with respect to their choices and decisions around treatment and sharing information about their HIV status, as well as the rights of other learners in all their diversity;
- delivers quality comprehensive sexuality education, in and outside of school, that includes accurate information on HIV prevention, treatment, care and support, as well as on gender equality, sexual and reproductive health, inclusiveness and human rights;
- provides students with referrals and linkages to health and social protection services, including for sexual and reproductive health, social welfare and psychosocial support; and
- ensures safe, inclusive, healthy learning environments that have policies in place to prevent and address all forms of violence and bullying, including all forms of gender-based violence, stigma and discrimination.

Focus: how can consideration of the theme be focused to allow for in-depth consideration in one day?

The thematic day will be led by young activists—including young women, young people living with HIV and young key populations—and will feature perspectives from teachers, ministry of education officials and civil society leaders. It will highlight testimonies from young women, young people living with HIV and young key populations about their experiences, underscoring the difficult reality that, for many, the experience of stigma and discrimination in school settings remains widespread.

The thematic day will also be an opportunity to highlight examples of best practices for creating an inclusive and health-promoting learning environment for young people in all their diversity, through examples of successful programmes and policies for in- and out-of-school contexts. In particular, it will spotlight examples of the roles that digital media, radio, tv and film can play to complement a high-quality education on HIV prevention, testing and treatment and for ending stigma and discrimination among young people.

Scope for action: how does the theme address possible and necessary action to be undertaken in the response to AIDS, rather than purely theoretical or academic issues?

The thematic day will underscore the need for national programmes that holistically address the needs of young people in all their diversity, especially young women, young key populations and young people living with HIV. It will highlight the role of the education sector as an entry point for promoting comprehensive sexuality education—including HIV knowledge and awareness, prevention, testing and treatment, and ending stigma and discrimination. It will also emphasize the importance of linkages to youth-friendly sexual and reproductive health services and social protection services. It will also be an opportunity to

underscore the need to remove age-of-consent laws and policies that are a barrier for adolescents and young people to access sexual and reproductive health and HIV services.

The thematic day will take place against a backdrop of renewed mobilization and momentum on this issue, including through the:

- Global Partnership for action to eliminate all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination, which includes a focus on education settings as one of six priority areas for action;
- “Positive Learning” partnership between UNESCO, GNP+ and Y+ Global to develop updated recommendations on strengthening the education sector response in line with the needs of young people living with HIV, through a youth-led approach;
- revised UN International Technical Guidance on comprehensive sexuality education, and the 2020 international technical and programmatic guidance on out-of-school comprehensive sexuality education, both of which include key guidance on providing comprehensive sexuality education that is inclusive of people living with HIV, combats stigma and discrimination, and promotes a rights-based approach; and
- “Education Plus” initiative, which elevates the voices of young women living with HIV and promotes their leadership for change.

The thematic day therefore will be intrinsically linked to concrete actions and initiatives being led by the Joint Programme, in partnership with civil society leaders.

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