

Press release

UNAIDS governing board meeting closes in Chiang Mai

Board launches second independent evaluation of UNAIDS, addresses gender concerns in national AIDS responses and announces search process for new Executive Director

Chiang Mai, Thailand, 25 April 2008 – The governing body of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) met in Chiang Mai from 23-25 April for the 22nd Meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB).

At the meeting the United States of America took over from Thailand as the new chair, the board appointed Ethiopia to act as vice chair, and Guatemala as rapporteur. This year's meeting in Chiang Mai was attended by more than 300 participants and observers from member states, international organisations, civil society and non-governmental organisations.

The theme of the 22nd meeting of the PCB was TB/HIV and issues around the diagnosis and treatment of TB among people living with HIV and the need for closer collaboration between HIV and TB programmes were addressed.

Taking priority on this year's official agenda were; gender sensitivity of AIDS responses; a second independent evaluation of UNAIDS; a follow up to the Global Task Team Independent Assessment; and the process of nomination for a new Executive Director of UNAIDS.

The PCB members also approved a new Memorandum of Understanding between UNAIDS and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria which was revised in light of a changing environment to give a clear definition of the complementary roles of the two organisations.

Independent Evaluation

In June 2007, the PCB requested that an independent evaluation of UNAIDS be carried out to reassess priorities, determine how to build on achievements and assess the efficacy and effectiveness of UNAIDS (Secretariat and Cosponsors) at the global, regional and country levels.

On the recommendation of the PCB an oversight committee will be established for the evaluation. The committee will consist of a balanced cross section of representatives from governments and civil society, ensuring appropriate participation of people living with HIV and other stakeholders.

The final report will be presented at the December 2009 PCB meeting.

Gender Guidance for National AIDS Responses

The PCB also acknowledged the urgent need to address gender concerns and the need to scale-up country level work.

It asked UNAIDS to take immediate action to respond to these concerns by developing tools to assist countries in planning and implementing accelerated action. The tools should address

women, girls and gender inequality; as well as men who have sex with men, transgender, bisexual and lesbian populations.

Progress will be reported to the December 2008 meeting of the PCB.

UNAIDS Executive Director announces end of term

On the second day of the meeting, Executive Director of UNAIDS Dr Peter Piot presented his report, announcing that after 12 years as Executive Director he would be stepping down at the end of his term (31 December 2008). He noted that this was an opportune moment given the timing of the independent evaluation.

Dr Piot recapped on some of the achievements and challenges of the international AIDS response over the past 12 years, "Today, AIDS is on the global agenda. Unprecedented political leadership and civil society mobilization has saved millions of lives," said Dr Piot. "However we are still facing serious challenges; AIDS remains one of the leading causes of death globally; for every two people who start treatment there are an additional 5 new infections; and with increasingly crowded political agendas we need to work much harder and smarter to ensure AIDS gets the support it needs."

The Committee of Cosponsoring Organisations will send a formal nomination for a new Executive Director to the UN Secretary-General after consultation with governments and other interested stakeholders as outlined in the ECOSOC resolution 1994/24 and the background document describing the process, approved by the 22nd PCB.

The next Programme Coordinating Board Meeting is scheduled to take place in Geneva in December 2008.

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UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS' Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at www.unaids.org