

# MANAGEMENT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT ON THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION REVIEW OF UNAIDS

**Additional documents for this item:** UNAIDS/PCB(45)/CRP2

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

*Take note* of the UNAIDS management response to the report of the Joint Inspection Unit on the management and administration review of UNAIDS.

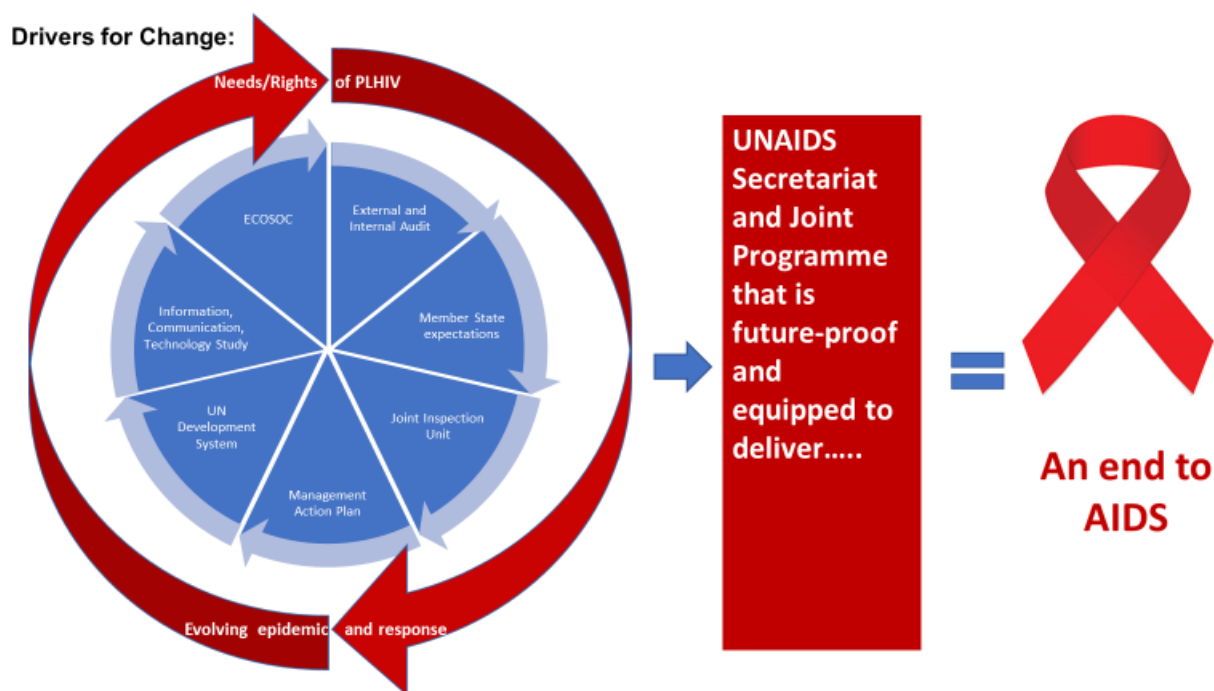
**Cost implications for the implementation of the decisions:**

To be determined

## INTRODUCTION

1. The Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is pleased to provide UNAIDS' comments on and response to the Joint Inspection Unit's (JIU) *Review of the management and administration in the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)* (JIU/REP/2019/7) (the "review").
2. The review was conducted as part of the JIU's 2018 programme of work, but was suspended in July 2018 due to the overlap of two other independent reviews, which were commissioned at that time. The response was completed on 13 November 2019, following receipt by the Executive Director of the JIU's final report.
3. The objective of the review was to provide an independent assessment of the regulatory frameworks and related practices concerning the management and administration of UNAIDS, with a view to highlighting areas for improvement. The review focused on the following areas:
  - strategic and operational planning;
  - governance;
  - oversight and accountability; and
  - human resource management and administrative services.
4. Based on the review, the Inspectors have made formal and informal recommendations for improvement. Three of the recommendations are to be considered by the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) and five by the UNAIDS Executive Director. Another 24 informal recommendations are with the Secretariat for consideration and implementation, while a further one is specifically for consideration by Cosponsors.
5. UNAIDS is grateful for the work of the JIU and the recommendations. It is committed to implement the recommendations, as well as to regular and transparent reporting on progress. However, it is also noted that final acceptance of the recommendations is the purview of the PCB, particularly the three formal recommendations that are addressed directly to the Board. Implementation of some of the recommendations will require consultation and collaboration with Cosponsors.
6. It is important to note that the JIU review is one of several drivers for the changes currently underway in UNAIDS. Together, those changes will create a stronger Secretariat and Joint Programme that are best-placed to support achievement of the goal to end AIDS by 2030 (Figure 1).

**Figure 1. UNAIDS Secretariat and Joint Programme drivers for change**



7. The drivers for change come from a wide range of UNAIDS stakeholders. Collectively, the recommendations inform the scope and thrust of the change agenda as UNAIDS strives for continuous improvement. Most, if not all the recommendations, are mutually reinforcing on both the need and direction for change in UNAIDS. They touch on all aspects of the Joint Programme from its strategy to deliver on its mandate, to staffing structures and capacities, and the organizational footprint and business models.
8. Given the inter-connectedness of and, in some cases, overlap between the recommendations, it is important to combine them into a single change programme where they can be appropriately sequenced and managed. While this document is intended as the official management response to the JIU recommendations, it also provides the PCB with information on the other, related drivers for change. This will clarify the context in the JIU recommendations will be implemented.

#### **GENERAL COMMENTS ON THE JOINT INSPECTION UNIT REVIEW**

9. The Executive Director considers the JIU review an important exercise to increase the effectiveness and accountability of the UNAIDS Secretariat and the Joint Programme. She is therefore pleased to note the JIU's recognition of the full cooperation, responsiveness and transparency provided by the UNAIDS Secretariat, the Cosponsors and key UNAIDS stakeholders during the review, which involved 64 interviews with 104 individuals and the circulation of 14 questionnaires to UNAIDS and the Cosponsors.
10. The Inspectors have recognized that the model of UNAIDS as a joint and cosponsored programme is "unique in the United Nations system and offers some lessons for the United Nations development system reform" and that this "model, its response to an epidemic and its collaboration at the field level could be replicated for other cross-cutting

issues such as gender and climate change.”<sup>1</sup> They also confirmed that “[m]any of the elements and structures in place in UNAIDS can serve as good practices and lessons learned for the reform aims of the United Nations development system and can be a resource for future programme development.”<sup>2</sup>

11. A central tenet of the 2030 Agenda is the commitment to "leave no one behind". UNAIDS takes particular pride in its focus on putting people—particularly people living with HIV, key populations and people in situations of vulnerability or marginalization—at the centre of its efforts, and on tailoring its responses to country-level needs and priorities.
12. The Executive Director is pleased that the Inspectors have recognized and reaffirmed the value of these approaches, by noting that “UNAIDS has a distinct focus on country priorities and putting resources at country level” and that, following the 70/30 initiative in 2013, “70 per cent of the Secretariat staff [was placed] outside Geneva [in a move] aimed at ‘delivering results closer to people living and affected by HIV, key populations, civil society and governments, as well as achieving maximum cost efficiencies.’”<sup>3</sup> The Inspectors also noted that this approach is “further strengthened by an effort to put people at the centre.”<sup>4</sup>
10. Although the AIDS response has achieved impressive results in certain regions, it remains fragile and the HIV epidemic continues to be an emergency in many parts of the world and for most affected communities, particularly those living with and vulnerable to HIV infection, including adolescent girls and young women, and key populations. Human rights violations and gender inequalities persist, affecting efforts to improve people's health and wellbeing.
11. Recent data confirm a worrying trend of highly uneven progress in the AIDS response. While the 1.7 million people who newly acquired HIV infection in 2018 represent a 16% decline since 2010, that trend was driven mostly by steady progress in eastern and southern Africa, where there has been a 28% decline in new HIV infections in that same period. At the same time, however, the annual number of new HIV infections has risen in eastern Europe and central Asia (29%), the Middle East and North Africa (10%) and Latin America (7%).
12. Women remain disproportionately affected by HIV in many countries, with their risks compounded by inequalities and gender-based violence. Young people face unique barriers to access to services, including: age of consent laws for HIV testing and services; limited access to non-stigmatizing and comprehensive sexual and reproductive health services; and limited access to comprehensive sexuality education.
13. Similarly, children are not benefiting sufficiently from the AIDS response. Progress in reducing new HIV infections among children (0–14 years) is much too slow. In 2018, an estimated 160 000 children were newly infected with HIV, four times more than the 2018 target. An estimated 940 000 children living with HIV globally were receiving antiretroviral therapy, well short of the 2018 target of 1.6 million despite a doubling in the number of receiving treatment since 2010.
14. An increasing proportion of new HIV infections are among key populations and their sexual partners. In 2018, people who inject drugs, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender people, prisoners and the sexual partners of these

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<sup>1</sup> JIU/REP/2019/XX, paragraph 154.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid., paragraph 157.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid, paragraph 158.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., paragraph 158.

key populations accounted for an estimated 54% of new HIV infections globally and 25% of new infections in eastern and southern Africa. Key populations continue to be left behind: national HIV responses are not reaching them adequately and they face harsh stigma and discrimination in many settings. It is therefore important to ensure that countries are supported to adjust and strengthen their AIDS responses for people whose needs have never really been met.

15. The Joint Programme therefore expresses its concern with the perspective that the evolution of the AIDS response is “presently characterized less by a sense of urgency and more by a focused and integrated response”.<sup>5</sup> In the view of UNAIDS, the Joint Programme must remain “fit for purpose” to address the epidemic with continued agility and urgency, while also transitioning towards a future where it will increasingly support country sustainability efforts and non-emergency approaches that are integrated with other health and development programming, as appropriate.
14. Finally, the Secretariat acknowledges that the recent harassment cases cost UNAIDS almost USD 1.3 million from 2018 to 2019. UNAIDS regrets the harm caused to individuals concerning recent cases of harassment and other abuses of power, as well as the reputational and financial damage done to the organization.
15. UNAIDS is determined to ensure that staff are protected and it continues to commit to a policy of zero tolerance for harassment or abuse of authority in any form. Through the Management Action Plan and other measures, the Secretariat is working to build a new workplace culture that ensures the safety and dignity of all. Indeed, UNAIDS is pleased to report that part of the USD 1.3 million has been invested in systems strengthening to enable a healthy, inclusive and accountable workplace.

## COMMENTS ON THE FORMAL JIU RECOMMENDATIONS

16. The next section addresses each of the eight formal recommendations, i.e. the three recommendations addressed to the PCB and the five recommendations addressed to the UNAIDS Executive Director.
17. In commenting on these recommendations, the Secretariat recognizes that the final response to the recommendations is the purview of the PCB. In addition, as mentioned above, the Secretariat intends to implement the agreed recommendations within a broader change context, which will include relevant recommendations from previous reviews.

Recommendation 1 to the PCB: Beginning in 2020, PCB should develop a long-term strategy for achieving UNAIDS’ 2030 Agenda targets and goals (paragraph 39 of the report)

18. As a member of the UN Development System (UNDS), UNAIDS remains fully committed to the 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda. Under the longer-term vision for 2030, the new UNAIDS Strategy will articulate the Joint Programme’s contribution to that Agenda and particularly to the attainment of five-year interim targets which are currently being developed (the next being for 2025). In doing so, the new UNAIDS strategy will need to consider not only changing epidemiology, but the political, social, policy and funding context for the AIDS response. Similarly, UNAIDS as a Joint Programme is committed to working closely with all stakeholders to create space for dialogue that

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid, paragraph 17.

informs strategy development and ensures that the proposed solutions are owned by the communities they are intended to serve.

Recommendation 3 to the PCB: By the beginning of 2021, PCB should revise its Modus Operandi to clarify its role and responsibilities and embed oversight and accountability mechanisms in the oversight of UNAIDS and its secretariat (paragraph 73 of the report)

19. The most recent revision of the Modus Operandi occurred in 2011. UNAIDS takes note of the recommendation to revise the Modus Operandi and the Inspectors' perspective on the oversight and accountability mechanisms of the PCB. It looks forward to the PCB's deliberations on these two recommendations.
20. The Secretariat recognizes that the PCB discussion on the possible revision of the Modus Operandi is likely to be informed by related discussions in recent PCB meetings and by the work of the PCB Working Group to strengthen the PCB's monitoring and evaluation role on zero tolerance against harassment, including sexual harassment, bullying and abuse of power at the UNAIDS Secretariat. Those efforts will require engagement with the UNAIDS Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations in updating and revising the Modus Operandi.

Recommendation 5 to the PCB: PCB should consider creating an independent and external oversight committee that provides independent expert advice to PCB and to the Executive Director in fulfilling their governance and oversight responsibilities (paragraph 117 of the report)

21. As standard and best practice in many UN and other international organizations, UNAIDS welcomes the creation of a mechanism to better engage with the PCB and to strengthen the PCB's oversight of the Joint Programme. In doing so, the Secretariat takes note of the best practices for oversight and accountability committees as outlined in the JIU's 2019 review of Audit and Oversight Committees in the United Nations System (JIU/REP/2019/6), and it encourages the PCB to consider that report jointly with this recommendation.

Recommendation 2 to the Executive Director: By the end of 2022 the Executive Director should present to PCB, operational plans that include secretariat structures, staffing, financial resources and field presence with defined timelines and targets that reflect the long-term strategy of UNAIDS (paragraph 43 of the report)

22. The UNAIDS Secretariat agrees with the Inspectors' perspective that there is room to further improve its operational planning process. Implementation of this recommendation will clearly be informed by, among others, ongoing UN reform and other change imperatives, including constrained financial resources.

Recommendation 4 to the Executive Director: The Executive Director should consider setting up an in-house legal advisory function that reports to the Executive Office and centrally coordinates legal matters (paragraph 98 of the report)

23. In order to further optimize the legal services provided by UNAIDS Secretariat HRM-Legal, two professional-level staff members have been recruited, resulting in a marked increase in the legal and policy advisory capacity of the Human Resources Department. The Secretariat is currently reviewing the existing arrangements with WHO for the provision of legal services. That is occurring as part of a broader review of the comprehensive agreement between WHO and the UNAIDS Secretariat, which is already underway and is expected to include a job profile for an in-house legal advisory function.

Recommendation 6 to the Executive Director: By the end of 2020, the Executive Director in consultation with the PCB Bureau, should establish a regular stand-alone agenda item at a session of PCB that covers internal and external audits, ethics and other accountability topics presented by the appropriate independent functions with their respective reports to PCB (paragraph 124 of the report)

24. The Secretariat recognizes the value of independent, standalone reports provided to the PCB and will work to implement this recommendation in consultation with the PCB Bureau.

Recommendation 7 to the Executive Director: No later than 2022 the Executive Director should develop and implement a new human resources strategy for the UNAIDS secretariat that aligns with and supports the strategic direction of UNAIDS and sets out initiatives related to work force planning, position profiles and grades, appropriate delegation of authorities and reporting lines (paragraph 149 of the report)

25. The current Human Resources Strategy for 2016–2021 continues to drive the core functions of the organization. It is based on four pillars:

- inspiring collective leadership;
- investing in people;
- strengthening the performance culture; and
- ensuring an enabling workplace.

26. In the first quarter of 2020, the results of the current Human Resources Strategy will be reviewed. That process will include meaningful consultation with staff and key stakeholders, and will inform the development of a new Human Resources Strategy. The latter will align with and support the corporate strategy (currently being developed) and other change drivers, such as implementation of UN reform. Work on the delegation of authority and staff mobility has begun, with the former to be rolled-out via an automated tool in mid-2020.

Recommendation 8 to the Executive Director: The Executive Director should include an annex to the 2021 biennial report to ECOSOC outlining the substantive recommendations that have been made in the areas of governance, oversight and accountability and provide a status update on implementation (paragraph 164 of the report)

23. UNAIDS agrees with the recommendation to keep the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) informed about the JIU's recommendations and the status of their implementation. UNAIDS will work with the ECOSOC Secretariat to ensure that this information is brought to the Council.

## OTHER DRIVERS FOR CHANGE

### Economic and Social Council

24. UNAIDS reports to its parent UN body, ECOSOC, every two years. The resolution passed by the most recent ECOSOC session in July 2019 includes a paragraph that requires specific action from the PCB, and which is relevant in the context of the JIU recommendations:<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> E/RES/2019/33.



Paragraph 12: “Requests the PCB to discuss governance issues of the Joint Programme, as well as how the Joint Programme could be sustainably core funded, in accordance with all relevant UN principles, with a view to evaluating such issues, in order to have an effective, efficient and accountable Joint Programme, and to report to the ECOSOC by 2021.”

25. The paragraph calls for the PCB to discuss governance and funding issues in order to have an effective, efficient and accountable Joint Programme.

### **External and Internal Audit**

26. The UNAIDS Secretariat purchases internal audit services from WHO (Office of Internal Oversight Services) and both the external (Commission of Audit of the Republic of the Philippines) and internal auditors report to the PCB annually.
27. In line with the JIU recommendations on the oversight of UNAIDS, the external auditor, in its June 2019 report to the PCB, identified three areas where financial management mechanisms could be improved.<sup>7</sup> UNAIDS could effectively assess its Internal Control Framework by integrating and further reinforcing identified internal control principles into its existing self-assessment checklist. UNAIDS could also enhance and improve its policies for Travel Exceptions and Direct Financial Contributions. Enhanced oversight of follow-up to internal and external audit recommendations is directly linked to the JIU review recommendation 6 on the establishment of a regular stand-alone PCB agenda item.

### **Member State expectations**

28. While the views and needs of all Member States guide the work of UNAIDS, UN entities including UNAIDS, are subject to regular reviews by donors which increasingly are including assessments of the implementation of UNDS reform and of the ability of the UN to work more collaboratively and deliver efficiencies. The most recent Institutional Assessment Report on UNAIDS from the 2015–2016 MOPAN included a recommendation related to a lack of independent evaluations, among other matters.<sup>8</sup> That issue has been proactively addressed with the creation of an independent evaluation function which reports to the PCB. In an increasingly resource-constrained environment, it is crucial that UNAIDS is able to demonstrate how its actions positively impact on the attainment of the 2030 Agenda and on ending the AIDS epidemic, and demonstrate its relevance as a Joint Programme that delivers value for money. This will likely be the case when the PCB considers how the Joint Programme can be sustainably funded, as per the 2019 ECOSOC recommendation (paragraph 24, above).

### **Management Action Plan**

29. The UNAIDS Secretariat’s Management Action Plan for a healthy, equitable and enabling workplace for all UNAIDS staff was endorsed by the PCB at its June 2019 meeting. The core aim is to create and reinforce an organizational culture in the UNAIDS Secretariat, inspired by feminist principles, in which staff are empowered to call-out and address inappropriate behaviour thus preventing problems at early stages from further escalation. Through broad discussions before and after the publication of the Action Plan, managers and staff have been made aware of their accountabilities to the

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<sup>7</sup> UNAIDS/PCB(44)/19.14.

<sup>8</sup> <http://www.mopanonline.org/assessments/unaid2015-16/Mopan%20UNAIDS%20report%20%5binteractive%5d%20%5bfinal%5d.pdf>.

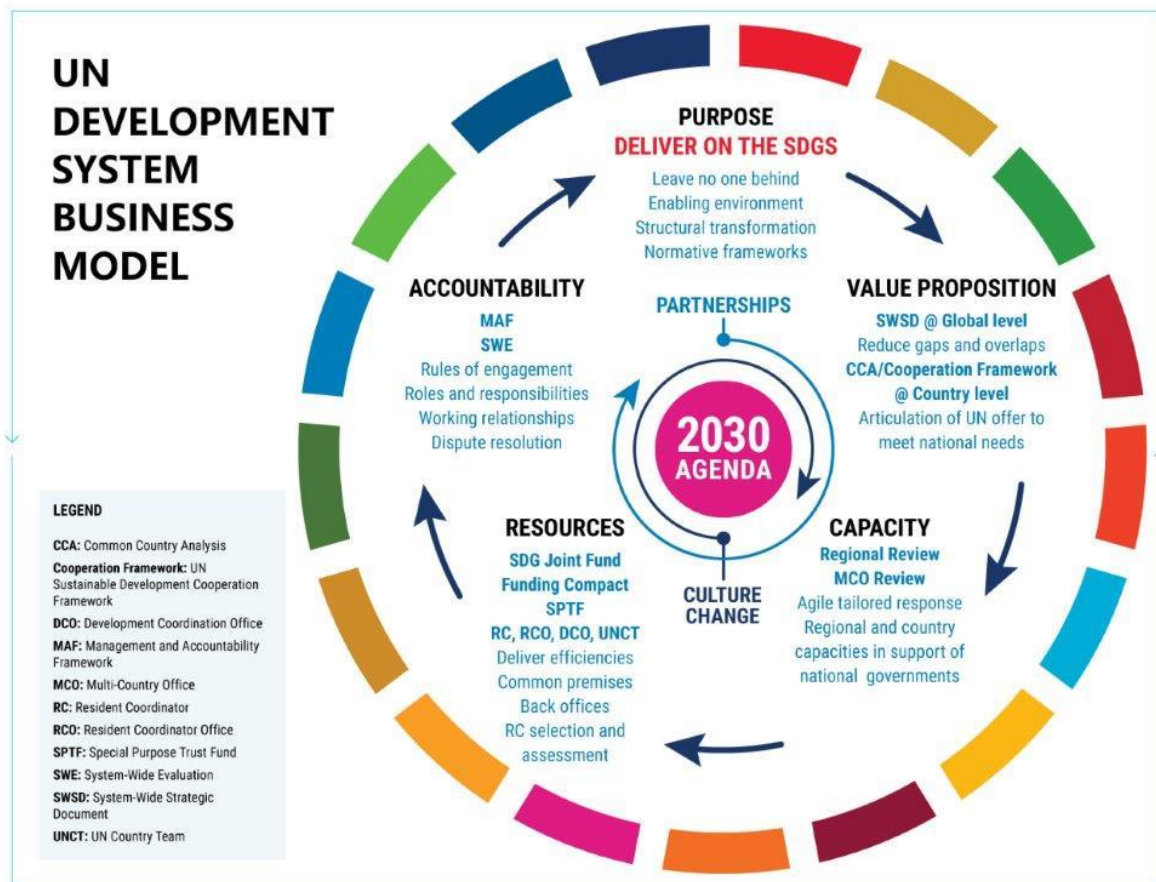
organization and each other. UNAIDS is promptly addressing any substandard or unacceptable behaviours as soon as we become aware of them. UNAIDS' values are embedded in job profiles and performance objectives, and in a pilot programme of 180-degree performance management for senior staff implemented with the intention of rolling out to more managers in 2020. This culture change is reinforced by the establishment of a cadre of Dignity at Work advisers (a peer mechanism), which is providing support in building knowledge of rights at work, promoting mental health and wellbeing, addressing bullying and harassment, and fostering an inclusive workplace culture. In addition, a Diversity Task Force, comprising staff from across the organization, will advise senior management on ways to strengthen diversity and inclusion in the Secretariat. Human resources policy and legal capacity has been strengthened and the selection process for a staff welfare officer is nearing completion.

29. The Secretariat has also taken steps to end impunity. Staff are being trained on the internal justice mechanisms and on knowing their rights at work, as well as on unconscious bias. The WHO Internal Oversight Services, the WHO/UNAIDS Office of the Ombudsman, Human Resources Management and the UNAIDS Secretariat Staff Association are supporting those activities. Reports or allegations of misconduct that are referred to the Ethics Office are investigated with reporting systems that ensure the anonymity of the alleged victim. A whistleblower policy also aims to support staff and prevent retaliation. Regional management meetings have also been leveraged to engage with field staff and ensure that expected behavioural standards are communicated across the entire organization. UNAIDS is pleased that the JIU has recognized the need for the full implementation of the Management Action Plan: we have made good progress, but much remains to be done if we are to fully support and empower our staff.

### **UN Development System**

30. Eighteen months have passed since the General Assembly adopted Resolution 72/279 on "Repositioning of the United Nations development system", which guides the UN Development System's (UNDS) transformation to better support countries to implement the 2030 Agenda.
31. Much of the collective implementation of UNDS reform is being undertaken jointly by the UN Sustainable Development Group, of which the UNAIDS Secretariat and the 11 Cosponsors are members. This occurs under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General and with the support of the UN Development Coordination Office and a Transition Team. UNAIDS has actively supported this work, including through the loan of a UNAIDS Secretariat staff member to the Transition Team for a year. There are also elements of the reform and the move to a new business model which impact agencies individually and which may require specific adjustments and actions.

Figure 2. United Nations Development System business model



32. The redesign of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (now known as the United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework, or Cooperation Framework) was endorsed by UNDS principals on 8 May 2019.
33. The Cooperation Framework entails a bottom-up approach and is based on a single, common country analysis. It sets out how and what the UNDS can offer to address country needs. This requires an SDG-based, multisectoral approach in which UNDS members commit to work jointly to achieve results at the outcome level. As the single-most important planning and implementation tool for UNDS engagement in a given country, it will be vital for UNAIDS to strengthen its support to UN Country Teams in their preparation of a Cooperation Framework, including through data to support the common country analysis, HIV-trend analysis of previous United Nations Development Assistance Frameworks and a focus on countries that are deprioritizing HIV in the articulation of their national needs.
34. The new Cooperation Framework model was recognized in the ECOSOC resolution on UNAIDS, which urged the Joint Programme to continue “its active engagement in UN reform efforts at the national, regional and global levels, and, specifically, at the country level to position the AIDS response as an integral part of sustainable development cooperation between the UN country teams and the host Governments and country stakeholders to achieve the AIDS-related commitments, in accordance with national contexts and priorities, and the broader Sustainable Development Goals, and to ensure that no one is left behind.”

35. The Cooperation Framework also triggers a review of UN Country Team configuration to ensure that it has the necessary capacity and access to the required expertise to deliver on the commitments contained in that Framework. Commitments can be serviced by agencies, funds and programmes through more agile business methodologies (i.e. physical presence is no longer a necessity). Since UNAIDS is an entity with a business model for differentiated country support, this provides it with an opportunity to refine its model to better respond to specific needs under different settings and at different development levels.
36. UN INFO, an existing tool managed by Development Coordination Office, is the agreed UNDS planning, monitoring and reporting platform at country level. Discussion is underway on the architecture and rollout as a single data entry tool and national ownership to benefit the multiple uses of the data captured in UN INFO. UNAIDS is committed to use of the tool and will work to streamline planning, monitoring and reporting processes, for example, to establish whether or not UN INFO could replace the current UNAIDS Joint Programme Monitoring System.
37. UNAIDS welcomes the strengthened independence and impartiality of the Resident Coordinators, which enhances their authority, effectiveness and capacity to ensure a comprehensive and cohesive UN response to the 2030 Agenda at country level.
38. The empowered Resident Coordinator system is central to the repositioning of the UNDS at country level. This inherent coordination function adds major value to the UNDS offer through the delivery of more strategic and better integrated joint programmes and operations. Predictable and timely funding of the Resident Coordinator system will be a critical success factor. UNAIDS will continue to provide full contributions, using the agreed cost-sharing formula, and it has implemented the 1% levy on heavily earmarked funds.
39. The revised Management and Accountability Framework is a central element of the new UNDS. The UNAIDS Secretariat will review job descriptions of its Country Directors in close coordination with other entities to include common language on responsibilities as a UN Country Team member, joint programming and the new matrixed reporting arrangement. The UNAIDS Secretariat performance appraisal system already integrates feedback from the Resident Coordinators on UNAIDS Country Directors or UNAIDS Country Managers and the principle of mutual accountability, whereby UNAIDS Country Directors inform the appraisal of Regional Coordinators.
40. The Secretary-General has established a number of efficiency gains targets:<sup>9</sup>
- all UNCTs adopt an improved Business Operations Strategy by 2021;
  - increase the proportion of UN common premises to 50% by 2021;
  - establish common "back offices" for all UN Country Teams by 2022;
  - explore consolidation of location-independent business operations into a network of shared service centres;
  - operate with mutual recognition of best practices regarding policies and procedures;
  - measure client satisfaction with regard to all back-office services; and
  - agree pricing principles to ensure fairness and transparency in service provision.

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<sup>9</sup> A/72/684-E/2018/7.

41. UNAIDS Secretariat and 15<sup>10</sup> other UNDS entities have signed the High-Level statement, agreeing with the principles of mutual recognition, thereby facilitating active collaboration across agencies in the areas of procurement, human resources, information technology and finance. This is a significant departure from the historical barrier to collaborating through shared services. It will greatly increase operational agility by removing the need to review other providers' policies and procedures before entering into a service agreement.
42. The Business Innovations Group, a strategic results group of the UNSDG, leads efforts at the system-wide level to develop common policies or systems to measure progress. The work of this Group towards consolidating common "back offices" is entering a critical operational phase, with pilots envisaged in six countries.<sup>11</sup> The UNAIDS Secretariat is engaged in the process, and is providing the perspective of both a small-size organization and an intended recipient of common "back office" services.
43. The UNAIDS Secretariat also participated in the UN Services Marketplace Survey, which was launched by the Business Innovations Group in July 2019 and was shared with member entities of the High-Level Committee on Management. Each entity was requested to indicate:
- which activities they are currently providing to other entities;
  - which activities they would be willing to start providing now or in the future; and
  - which activities they would like to receive from other entities.
44. Submissions have been received from 16 entities to date and the consolidation of this data is ongoing. In taking this work forward, the UNAIDS Secretariat will develop service catalogues for its human resources, finance and information technology processes to better understand the costs of doing business and, consequently, where efficiencies can be sought.
45. UNAIDS is also committed to the ongoing review to optimize and restructure UN regional assets in support of the 2030 Agenda. Further, in line with the outcome of the Multicountry Office Review, UNAIDS will work with UNSDG partners to identify specific actions to "ensure a more coherent, effective and efficient coverage and collaboration for results vis-à-vis multi-country office settings". This will include reviewing staff capacities in order to maximize programmatic support and expertise, and to assess capacities available in each country.

### **Information, communication and technology study**

46. Information, communication and technology (ICT) provides the platform for and essential support to the Secretariat's programmatic and operational work, as well as for developing and supporting tools for the Joint Programme more widely. It was the first and only service to be "off-shored" by the UNAIDS Secretariat. A team of 26 staff provides "follow-the-sun" helpdesk support for all Secretariat staff and is based in Geneva, Nairobi, Panama and Bangkok.
47. The study, conducted by an external consultant, compared the strengths, capacities and gaps of this model against industry best practice and key metrics of other UN agencies, to assess the maturity and execution of ICT processes. The study identified four key improvement areas:

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<sup>10</sup> The UN Secretariat, FAO, ILO, IOM, ITU, UN Women, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNRWA, WFP and WHO.

<sup>11</sup> Albania, Botswana, Jordan, Laos, Senegal and Viet Nam.

- organization: evolve the current model into the industry-proven “plan/build/run” model with simplified reporting structures and an agile use of external resources to increase bandwidth;
- capabilities: fix existing gaps in line with UNAIDS expectations, including project, resources and business relationships management and ICT security;
- leadership: re-establish a unifying leadership of ICT to restore accountability, discipline and transparency, develop corporate ownership of ICT and mechanisms to govern ICT priorities, vision and strategy; and
- efficiency: introduce other internal, operational improvements to make ICT more efficient and responsive.

48. Given the inter-connectedness of the change drivers outlined above, implementation of the study recommendations will also have to address the move to shared services and common "back offices", as well as the need to technically support a potentially more differentiated UNAIDS Secretariat footprint.

## CONCLUSION

49. In accepting the recommendations of the JIU review, UNAIDS recognizes that their implementation will be informed and refined by discussion at the PCB. Further, although detailed in many instances, implementation of individual recommendations will need to be carefully sequenced and nuanced to accommodate other change imperatives. It is proposed that the Secretariat will bring all these elements together into a single change programme. That programme will set out the relationships between and the sequencing of the individual change elements, provide a timeline and resourcing plan, and the Secretariat will update the PCB on progress accordingly.
50. Finally, the arrival of a new Executive Director for UNAIDS provides a unique opportunity for an organization-wide programme of change that unites all of these drivers and which together delivers meaningful and transformative change so that the UNAIDS Secretariat and the Joint Programme emerge stronger and best placed to support countries to end AIDS by 2030.

*[End of document]*