



REVIEW OF THE MANAGEMENT AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE JOINT UNITED NATIONS PROGRAMME ON HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

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UNAIDS



Background

The Joint Inspection Unit (JIU) of the United Nations system included, in its Programme of Work for 2018, the first review of the management and administration of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) as one of a series of similar reviews of JIU participating organizations.

UNAIDS, established by the Economic and Social Council in 1994 as a joint and co-sponsored programme, serves as the primary entity responsible for stimulating and coordinating global efforts to provide treatment, care and support for those living with HIV/AIDS and, ultimately, to unite the efforts to prevent the transmission of the virus. It was envisioned as an innovative partnership to coordinate and facilitate the HIV/AIDS response of its co-sponsoring organizations (currently, ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, UN-Women, WFP, WHO and the World Bank Group).



Objective and Purpose

The main objective of this review is to provide an independent assessment of the regulatory frameworks and related practices concerning the management and administration of UNAIDS and its secretariat, highlighting areas of concern and in need of improvement, as well as the challenges faced. The review focuses on: (a) strategic and operational planning; (b) governance; (c) oversight and accountability; and (d) human resources management and administrative services. It considers the unique structure and model of UNAIDS as a joint and co-sponsored programme, and its current context.



What the JIU concluded

The main conclusions of the report are that:

1. UNAIDS should develop a new long-term strategy for meeting the 2030 Agenda.

This strategic planning should not be a replacement or update to the current strategy. It should reflect a structural analysis and an inclusive approach on how UNAIDS will meet its commitments regarding the 2030 Agenda, including the participation and role of its co-sponsors and key partners, as well as how the secretariat will support the strategy through operational planning.

2. Governance and oversight of UNAIDS needs to be strengthened.

UNAIDS is governed by the Programme Coordinating Board. The Board must fulfill its oversight and accountability roles and responsibilities in order to bring UNAIDS into alignment with other United Nations system organizations, and avoid reputational and financial setbacks.

3. Oversight and accountability gaps in UNAIDS need to be addressed.

The gaps include reassessing critical functions such as legal advisory and ethics functions, establishing a disciplined approach towards oversight reports and who delivers them, and fully exercising the Board's role in the oversight and accountability of UNAIDS and its secretariat. Internal and external audit coverage, engagement with auditors, and how audit reports are considered should be re-examined

4. A new human resources strategy for the secretariat needs to be developed and implemented.

Human resources management in the secretariat needs to be guided by a new and more comprehensive strategy, that reflects the strategic direction of UNAIDS and is supported by consistent and transparent processes and procedures.

5. The UNAIDS model is unique and worthy of further study.

The joint and co-sponsored model of UNAIDS can offer valuable good practices and lessons learned for the reform of the United Nations development system. While the model is unique and worthy of further study, the gaps in governance, oversight and accountability that have generated several recommendations from different independent review bodies should be catalogued and addressed in a transparent way.



What JIU Recommends

The JIU makes 8 formal recommendations to the Programme Coordinating Board and Executive Director as well as 25 informal recommendations.

The Programme Coordinating Board is called on to:

1 Beginning in 2020, develop a long-term strategy to achieve the targets and goals of UNAIDS with regard to the 2030 Agenda.

2 By the beginning of 2021, revise its Modus Operandi to clarify its roles and responsibilities and imbed oversight and accountability mechanisms in the oversight of UNAIDS and its secretariat.

3 Consider creating an independent and external oversight committee to provide independent expert advice to the Programme Coordinating Board and to the Executive Director in fulfilling their governance and oversight responsibilities.

The Executive Director of UNAIDS is called on to:

4 By the end of 2022, present to the Programme Coordinating Board operational plans, together with defined timelines and targets, that reflect the long-term strategy of UNAIDS, including with regard to secretariat structures, staffing, financial resources and field presence.

5 Consider setting up an in-house legal advisory function that reports to the Executive Office and centrally coordinates legal matters.

6 By the end of 2020, in consultation with the Bureau of the Programme Coordinating Board, establish a regular stand-alone agenda item at one of the Board's meetings each year to cover internal and external audits, ethics and other topics on accountability presented by the appropriate independent functions, in their respective reports to the Board.

7 By no later than 2022, develop and implement a new human resources strategy for the secretariat that aligns with and supports the strategic direction of UNAIDS and sets out the initiatives related to workforce planning, position profiling and grading, and appropriate delegation of authority and reporting lines.

8 Include an annex to the 2021 biennial report to the Economic and Social Council, outlining the substantive recommendations that have been made in the areas of governance, oversight and accountability, and provide a status update on their implementation.



Methodology & Approach

In accordance with the JIU internal standards and working procedures, the review was conducted using a blend of qualitative and quantitative data collection methods from different sources for consistency, validity, and reliability.



Desk review of relevant UNAIDS documents



14 questionnaires to the secretariat and co-sponsoring organizations



64 interviews with 104 individuals from the secretariat, co-sponsoring organizations, Board delegates, UN Secretariat, and other stakeholders



4 focus groups with co-sponsoring organizations and NGOs delegates



Observations of the Programme Coordinating Board meetings



JIU Reports 2018/2019

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[JIU/REP/2019/5](#), Managing cloud computing services in the United Nations system

[JIU/REP/2019/4](#), Review of change management in United Nations system organizations

[JIU/REP/2019/3](#), Review of the integration of disaster risk reduction in the work of the United Nations system in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

[JIU/REP/2019/2](#), Review of the United Nations System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women

[JIU/REP/2019/1](#), Review of management and administration in the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO)

[JIU/REP/2018/7](#), Strengthening policy research uptake in the context of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

[JIU/REP/2018/6](#), Enhancing accessibility for persons with disabilities to conferences and meetings of the United Nations system

[JIU/REP/2018/5](#), Opportunities to improve efficiency and effectiveness in administrative support services by enhancing inter-agency cooperation

[JIU/REP/2018/4](#), Review of whistle-blower policies and practices in United Nations system organizations

[JIU/REP/2018/3](#), Review of management and administration in the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

[JIU/REP/2018/2](#), Progress report on the recommendations contained in the review of South-South and triangular cooperation in the United Nations system (JIU/REP/2011/3)

[JIU/REP/2018/1](#), Review of internship programmes in the United Nations system

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