
2014 UBRAF thematic report

Leadership and advocacy

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ACHIEVEMENTS

Under the leadership of UNAIDS Executive Director Michel Sidibé, UNAIDS has built the vision, momentum and foundations of political support to end AIDS as a public health threat by 2030, ensuring that no one is left behind.

The Executive Director met with heads of state and government and undertook numerous bilateral country visits and three strategic joint country visits with key partners—the Central African Republic with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), Namibia with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), and Mali with the Global Fund and the World Health Organization (WHO). In addition, the two Deputy Executive Directors undertook a number of country visits to engage directly with key partners in the AIDS response and reinforce UNAIDS' corporate priorities. This extensive advocacy generated new bold commitments to support UNAIDS' call for acceleration of the global AIDS response, shared responsibility and global solidarity.

The International AIDS Conference in Melbourne, Australia and the United Nations (UN) General Assembly session provided crucial global platforms where UNAIDS mobilized unprecedented support from UN Member States, donors, civil society and other partners to accelerate and scale up the AIDS effort over the next 5 years. Key country and multilateral commitments were secured in the last quarter of 2014. These include commitments from ministers of health from BRICS countries (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa), the Department of State of the United States of America, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and Luxembourg, which made the first pledge of direct financial support to UNAIDS for implementation of the 90–90–90 targets (global consensus for 90% of people living with HIV knowing their HIV status, 90% of people who know their HIV status accessing treatment and 90% of people on treatment having suppressed viral loads, so they remain healthy).

In 2014 UNAIDS reinforced Africa's leadership and progress in the AIDS response. As a result of the African Union (AU) Meeting of Ministers of Finance in Abuja and the AU annual meeting in Malabo, countries are now developing robust, inclusive and results-focused national strategies and investment cases, providing a solid framework for change.

Thanks to extensive efforts from UNAIDS, the League of Arab States endorsed a new ground-breaking Arab AIDS Strategy (2014–2020) to address the growing HIV epidemic in the region by providing a crucial political and normative platform for future action.

African leaders and key multilateral organizations also strengthened and broadened support for the local production of medicines in Africa. Benefits of local production include shortened supply chains, which help to reduce stockouts and enhance the capacity of local regulatory authorities to oversee quality standards. The UNAIDS Secretariat ensured enhanced support for local production was one of the key outcomes of the seventh joint AU Conference of Ministers of Economy and Finance and the UN Economic Commission for Africa Conference of African Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic

Development held in Abuja, Nigeria in March–April 2014.

The Protect the Goal initiative, launched at the 2010 FIFA World Cup in South Africa, has become a global social movement for using the power of sport to promote the “three zeros”, end violence against women, promote social justice and protect human rights. In 2014 more than 20 heads of state from 5 continents endorsed this global advocacy campaign. In Brazil, host nation of the 2014 FIFA World Cup, HIV testing, awareness and condom distribution were promoted at all World Cup stadiums.

In 2014 the UNAIDS Executive Director also positioned the Joint Programme to effectively contribute lessons from the AIDS response to the Ebola response, including a joint mission to Mali in October with the Global Fund, WHO and the Special Representative of France for Ebola. As part of this work, the UNAIDS Executive Director underlined the importance of identifying new and innovative ways of ensuring a people-centred approach to health that strengthens and reinforces human security and thus national security. A conference room paper sharing lessons from the AIDS response was also prepared for the Programme Coordinating Board in December 2014.

In line with the principle that human rights and gender equality must be a central part of everything we do, UNAIDS celebrated some notable human rights successes in 2014, including for women living with HIV in Namibia and for transgender people in Mexico. For example, laws have been passed lifting HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence and abolishing discriminatory provisions affecting people living HIV in the Comoros and Tajikistan.

The UNAIDS Secretariat continues its core mandate and leadership role to provide strategic information, producing epidemic data and extensive strategic analysis in flagship reports, on the AIDSinfo website and in various additional publications. This proved to be the basis of key strategic information for countries and partners, helping them drive a more strategic, focused, evidence-informed approach to planning and monitoring. New modelling of location-specific epidemics resulted in a list of 200 cities with relatively high levels of HIV prevalence, laying the foundation for the Fast-Track Cities Strategy. Other areas for which strategic information provided help were gender inequalities and violence against women and girls; national reviews of HIV strategic plans; development of HIV investment cases and country concept notes to mobilize financial resources from the Global Fund under the new funding model; and projection of investment needs to end HIV by 2030.

The establishment of a sex work steering group with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), and a new UN strategic advisory group on drug use and HIV, with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), WHO and other partners, has additionally contributed to making action around these two key populations more efficient and strengthened the UNAIDS coordination and leadership role.

Strategic discussions and consultations on funding were held with over 35 governments at the mission and capital level and over 15 foundations or members of the private sector.

New partnerships for cause-related marketing and fundraising were developed with Intercontinental Geneva, Cruciani, Conscious Step and Victoria Beckham.

MAJOR CHALLENGES AND HOW THESE WERE ADDRESSED

Although progress has been made in the AIDS response, gains are fragile and reversible and a focus on AIDS must be maintained as part of the post-2015 agenda. It is essential that UNAIDS continues to play a leading role in the global health and development sphere. Donors and partners have always looked to UNAIDS for innovation and inspiration through cutting-edge communication products.

We continue to face human rights and gender inequality challenges that risk undermining the bold vision of ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030. We will not succeed in Fast-Tracking the response or in achieving the 90–90–90 targets by 2020 while violence, harassment and denial of services prevent key populations, including women and girls, from accessing the services they need. We will also not end the AIDS epidemic in cities if we cannot confront marginalization or deep social and gender inequalities.

KEY FUTURE INTERVENTIONS

As we reach the end of the Millennium Development Goals deadline, UNAIDS will demonstrate the unique positive results that have been achieved through the AIDS movement, carrying these achievements forward and repositioning our agenda through the articulation of an updated and extended strategy. Support will be mobilized at the regional and international AIDS conference and the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting in 2016, among other platforms.

It is the responsibility of UNAIDS to set the direction for the global response. The updated and extended UNAIDS strategy needs to be bold and ambitious and at the same time operational. Moving forward, UNAIDS needs to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and to optimize its full potential. It must deliver on its commitments to be effective, use resources well and demonstrate results and value for money.

Together with governments, people living with HIV, civil society and other partners, UNAIDS will continue to lead the AIDS response, calling for greater ambition and more effective rights-based and gender-sensitive responses that leave no one behind.

Future action will focus on five priorities:

- Prevention remains high on the UNAIDS agenda. In particular, the Joint Programme will continue to push for young people, especially adolescent girls and young women, to have the knowledge, the means and the space to be able to negotiate their own sexuality and remain free of HIV.

- The Global Plan achievements and challenges should be documented, shared and used to leverage change for women and children, both within the 22 high-priority countries and more widely.
- The 90–90–90 HIV treatment target is an entry point to ending the AIDS epidemic and to transforming the way we think about service delivery. It involves women, communities and civil society working with the health system.
- Using the human rights agenda not as an academic exercise but as a platform for change is important. A five-point agenda to reach “everyone, everywhere” will use the new zero discrimination targets as a blueprint.
- UNAIDS work with cities is creating new momentum that must be sustained. Working through cities and with city leaders, the Joint Programme gains access to a whole new way of working, of enabling the voice of citizens to be heard and to influence how, what and where their health and HIV services are provided.

UNAIDS

20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

+41 22 791 3666

unaids.org