
UBRAF thematic report: mutual accountability

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Results

Improved efficiency, effectiveness and value for money

The UNAIDS Secretariat worked diligently throughout the 2012–2013 biennium to increase its ‘fitness for purpose’ in meeting current challenges, such as supporting countries in the final push to reach the MDGs and the global AIDS targets of the 2011 Political Declaration, and to position the organization to deliver most effectively in the post-2015 development agenda. Over this period, the Secretariat initiated an organizational realignment focused on three overarching objectives:

- Aligning resources—human and financial—with the UNAIDS vision and corporate priorities;
- Strengthening staff deployment and skills for an increased country focus; and
- Demonstrating value for money and achieving cost effectiveness.

The realignment process included the streamlining of its Geneva headquarters, with programmatic support refocused towards the global AIDS targets, and silos removed between programmatic areas; redeploying staff to the field, in particular to High Impact Countries; and re-profiling positions to better respond to programmatic priorities. At the country level, offices in High Impact Countries were further reinforced, while other offices were consolidated. New approaches included the creation of multi-country offices, locating UNAIDS focal points in the offices of the resident coordinators and placing greater reliance on national officers. As a result of the organizational realignment, the Secretariat has evolved from a largely headquarters-based organization to a field-based one, achieving a 30:70 headquarters to field ratio respectively; an objective set at the start of the realignment in July 2011.

The 2012 and 2013 Mobility exercises presented opportunities for headquarters, short-term and General Service staff to participate with an emphasis on strengthening capacity in the field. In total, 153 staff took on new positions in the last two mobility exercises.

The Secretariat also launched a UNAIDS Secretariat Gender Action Plan on International Women’s Day 2013 aimed at improving gender balance and empowering female staff, as well as nurturing a supportive organizational culture for all staff. In 2012, UNAIDS was one of the first organizations to pilot the UN System-wide Action Plan on Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-SWAP).

Implementation of the Human Resources Strategy led to revised policies on staff mobility and reassignment, recognition of personal status, staff development and learning, and career transition. During the biennium, a new performance and learning management tool was initiated aligning individual work objectives to organizational objectives.

To strengthen UN collective action on AIDS at country level, and to ensure UNAIDS is effectively positioning itself in the resident coordinator system, the positions of UNAIDS Country Coordinator were reprofiled, including a change in title to UNAIDS Country Director, to indicate the focus on high-level policy and strategic guidance and technical support.

Efforts continued to promote staff learning and development with a range of learning resources becoming available or under development, including core competency e-modules and UN Cares trainings.

An extensive field office safety and security survey and planning exercise was carried out with RSTs and UCOs. The planning exercise covered MOSS (Minimum Operating Security Standards) and OHS (Occupational Health and Safety) and related recommendations were communicated to all offices.

An information technology (IT) strategy and governance framework, developed in 2012 and launched in 2013, aligns IT services to the strategic and operational needs of UNAIDS and focuses the Secretariat's IT resources on harnessing and deploying technology and less on managing physical IT infrastructure. Part of the IT strategy included the establishment of a field and remote IT support hub in Nairobi, reflecting the realignment's focus on improving support to countries, reducing operating costs and fostering innovation and technology.

The realignment helped streamline the Secretariat's operations and achieve cost savings. As a result of efficiency reforms, more than US\$ 46 million was saved in 2012 and 2013, including notable reductions in costs associated with headquarters printing (28% volume decline in 2012) and IT (20% in 2012–2013). Proactive steps to re-negotiate contracts with service providers have resulted in tangible savings for the Secretariat, such as a new flat-rate plan for headquarters mobile phones, negotiated in 2013.

Strict enforcement of the Secretariat travel policy, the establishment of travel ceilings and the increased uptake of a self-booking travel tool, first introduced in 2012, ensured achieving and exceeding the travel reduction target of 25% for the 2012–2013 biennium.

Enhanced reporting and engagement with stakeholders

Underpinning the organizational realignment is the UNAIDS 2011–2015 Strategy, the 2012–2015 UBRAF and the UNAIDS Division of Labour. The UBRAF's holistic four-year planning framework allowed all parts of the Joint Programme at country, regional and global levels to better understand and invest in the response during the 2012–2013 biennium, providing a solid basis for work in 2014–2015.

UNAIDS successfully completed the first year (2012) of the performance monitoring and reporting cycle of the UBRAF, with the 32nd meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) commending the Secretariat for the quality and comprehensiveness of the case studies that accompanied 2012 UNAIDS Performance Monitoring Report. Prior to the PCB meeting, in March 2013, a multi-stakeholder consultation sought inputs into provisional reporting, while an internal global Joint Programme meeting reviewed the 2012 results and 2014–2015 plans for all UNAIDS themes; strategic goals and functions, High Level Meeting (HLM) targets and Division of Labour areas. The reflections on epidemic priorities, progress and challenges provided the basis for the UNAIDS 2014–2015 budget that was approved at the 32nd meeting—the development of which was guided by the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review (QCPR) recommendations.

Responding to the 32nd PCB request to refine the indicators of the UBRAF, in October 2013 a multi-stakeholder consultation considered UNAIDS programmatic and financial accountability, including civil society inputs. In June 2013, UNAIDS published a working paper highlighting how the Joint Programme engages with civil society to address the 28th PCB request for more explicit reporting on resourcing and engagement of civil society. The working paper generated dialogue, notably on developing a civil society subgroup of the Cosponsor Evaluation Working Group (CEWG), including PCB nongovernmental organization delegation representatives. As a consequence, it was decided a

similar paper would be prepared in 2014, guided by the subgroup.

Following a request by the PCB in June 2013, the Secretariat embarked on a midterm review of the UBRAF to take stock of work and lessons learned in implementing the UBRAF during the first two years. The findings of the review would be presented at the 34th PCB in July 2014.

Under the UBRAF, a Joint Programme Monitoring System (JPMS) was launched in 2012 as an online tool to measure results and outcomes at global, regional and country levels. The JPMS makes it possible to generate reports by individual components (e.g. by country and region) and by a particular output, outcome or thematic area. During JPMS training sessions in 2012 and 2013, more than 400 colleagues participated in web-based seminars (webinars) in English, French and Spanish. Following feedback on the post-implementation process, the JPMS tool was refined and simplified in 2013.

The adoption of the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) improved the comprehensiveness, quality and comparability of UNAIDS' financial reporting. In 2013, UNAIDS received a clean audit opinion on its 2012 financial statements, which were for the first time presented IPSAS-compliant.

A policy and governance model for enterprise risk management was developed and shared with all Secretariat staff in 2013. Having a comprehensive, formal and structured risk management strategy will enable the Secretariat to mainstream risk management in management processes.

UNAIDS governance and the broader UN system

The Secretariat's participation in numerous interagency bodies, such as the UN Development Group (UNDG), the High-Level Committee on Management (HLCM) and the High-Level Committee on Programme (HLCP) facilitates the sharing of change initiatives and ensures overall coordination of the HIV response with broader health, development, peace, and human rights goals. Transferring such knowledge and best practices supports efforts for UN reform and system-wide coherence—responding directly to QCPR recommendations and supporting the development of the second generation of Delivering as One.

Four PCB meetings were held in 2012–2013, with thematic segments on combination prevention, non-discrimination, and adolescents and youth. At the June 2012 PCB meeting, UN Women became UNAIDS' 11th Cosponsor, and at the 32nd PCB meeting, in June 2013, the Board received the first-ever update on the Secretariat's human resources management. With mounting momentum around the post-2015 development agenda, the Board requested a standing item on the AIDS response in post-2015 development agenda at subsequent PCB meetings.

During the biennium, two PCB field visits were conducted, in Ukraine and Zambia, respectively. Such field visits enable the Board to see first-hand the role of the Joint Programme in supporting a national AIDS response.

The UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution on the Joint Programme represented an important milestone in 2013. The resolution, which included cosponsors from all regional groups, representing the broadest cosponsorship to date for resolutions on the Joint Programme, stressed the importance of AIDS in the post-2015 period and the value of learning lessons from the unique approach of the Joint Programme.

Constraints, challenges and lessons learned

The Secretariat has moved into a consolidation phase to ensure continuing and strengthened credibility. In order to maximize impact and keep UNAIDS as an organization ‘fit for purpose’ in the global response to AIDS, a constant focus and emphasis on two key areas will be maintained: organizational strengthening through the optimal deployment of staff and resources, including championing staff development and innovation; and enhancing the business model for greater effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

Within the broader UN system, reflection at the CEB Principals level aims at ensuring the UN as a whole is ‘fit for purpose’ in delivering on a transformative agenda post 2015—UNAIDS leadership has been engaged in the process and provided strategic inputs. At the Joint Programme level, the inclusion of AIDS within the post-2015 goal framework is of paramount importance and concerted efforts are on-going, including among the Executive Heads of the UNAIDS Cosponsors, to position AIDS centrally in the post-2015 agenda, with a view to ending AIDS by 2030.

Against this backdrop, changes to epidemic situations in countries, and the increasing ability of some governments to support the AIDS response with domestic resources, mean the UN’s position in countries and its focus is also changing. With regard to Joint UN Team on AIDS, given a changing country context, it is clear that a ‘one size fits all model’ is not optimal, and UN Country Teams need to have a range of options. Revised Joint Team guidance will be the a good way of harnessing the UN potential to support national HIV responses to achieve the 2011 Political Declaration targets and respond to national challenges, while taking into account the positioning of the AIDS response in the post-2015 agenda.

At the Joint Programme level, independent evaluations of UNAIDS in 2012–2013, by AusAID, Denmark, Norway, the United Kingdom, the organization performance assessment network MOPAN and the Center for Strategic and International Studies, recognized UNAIDS’ strong advocacy and leadership role in the response, its emphasis on partnerships and its leadership on gender, human rights and reducing stigma. According to these assessments, UNAIDS has made important progress in managing performance and reporting results, in improving efficiency and cost and value consciousness, and in enhancing its strategic focus. Opportunities for further improvement include: sharpening UNAIDS strategic focus; strengthening the coverage, quality and access to evaluations; and joint work to further strengthen the accountability of the Joint Programme as a whole.

Key future interventions

Outcomes and feedback from the midterm review of the UBRAF will steer the UNAIDS approach, including developing a new UNAIDS strategy and strategic framework:

- **Coordinating the Joint Programme:** the Secretariat will continue to facilitate coordination, cohesion and collaboration across all areas of the Division of Labour. Members of the Joint Programme will seek to strengthen results-based management and enhance existing accountability frameworks for reporting, monitoring and evaluation. Another focus of the Secretariat will be to mobilize resources for the core budget.
- **Strengthening Joint Programme accountability:** efforts will continue to strengthen performance monitoring and reporting; for example, the JPMS will be further refined and

incorporate revised indicator definitions.

- **Strengthening governance:** support for governance will include enhancing intersessional work with regional groups and individual board members, strategic support to the PCB, such as through multi-stakeholder processes, the use of case studies in reporting and PCB field visits; and building synergies and closer ties to the governance structures of Cosponsors and other key partners, such as the Global Fund and UNITAID.
- **Ensuring resources are used strategically and results delivered cost-effectively:** the strategic realignment of the Secretariat will continue to ensure financial and human resources are aligned with the UNAIDS vision, to enable the Secretariat to deliver on its strategic role and the Division of Labour, while maximizing value for money. Staff will continue to be redeployed and functions and skills sets reviewed to meet current and future needs, commensurate with evolving corporate priorities. Building on the IT Strategy, deploying new technologies and applications, such as implementing the move to the cloud, will promote collaborative working and enhance knowledge management and communication throughout the organization.
- **Leadership, advocacy and political mobilization:** the Secretariat will continue to play a key role in mobilizing leadership, influencing the global agenda and advocating for political and financial investments in the AIDS response. Efforts to nurture new partnerships with diverse stakeholders, from celebrities to the private sector and civil society, will be an important component in generating political and social momentum around ensuring AIDS is a priority in the post-2015 development agenda.

Supporting documents

- *ECOSOC resolution 2013/11: Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS*
http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=E/RES/2013/11
- *Multi-stakeholder consultation on UNAIDS 2012-2015 UBRAF, 4 March 2013*
http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/document/2013/ubraf/20130304_3rdMulti-stakeholderConsultation-UNAIDS-UBRAF_en.pdf
- *UNAIDS performance monitoring report 2012 and accompanying documents submitted to the 32nd PCB meeting*
<http://www.unaids.org/en/aboutunaids/unaidsprogrammecoordinatingboard/pcbmeetingarchive/name.81184.en.asp>
- *UNAIDS PCB field visit to Zambia, 4-6 November 2013*
http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/pcb/2013/20131106_PCB-field-visit-Zambia_en.pdf
- *Independent review: NGO/civil society participation in the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (submitted to the 31st PCB meeting)*
http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/pcb/2012/20121116_PCB31_CRP3_Review_Civil_Society_Participation_in_UNAIDS_Final_en.pdf

UNAIDS

20 Avenue Appia
CH-1211 Geneva 27
Switzerland

+41 22 791 3666

unaid.org