

**Statement at Executive Board of UNICEF (first regular session)**

**New York, 11 February 2022 (hybrid meeting)**

**Delivery: Dr Cesar Nunez, Director, UNAIDS New York Office**

**Item 5 of the agenda**

**Oral report on UNICEF follow-up to the recommendations and decisions of the forty-seventh and forty-eighth meetings and two special sessions of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS Programme Coordinating Board**

**Introduction**

- **Mr President, distinguished members of the Board,**
- **Thank you for this opportunity to contribute to the discussions of the Executive Board. We would also like to use this opportunity to once again welcome Executive Director Russel to the UNAIDS family.**
- **UNICEF this year, also takes on the important role of the chair of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) in guiding the collective work of the Co-sponsored programme.**
- **We appreciate this opportunity to update this Executive Board on the progress made across the work of the Joint Programme in a year where the UNAIDS Board adopted a new Global AIDS Strategy, approved a 2022-2026 joint budget, and where ECOSOC considered reports from the Executive Director and the Board in addition to the High-Level Meeting in the General Assembly which adopted a bold Political Declaration.**
- **We were particularly pleased to see the importance and attention given to Paediatric HIV prevention and treatment at the High-Level Meeting.**

**Partnership for results and a model for UN Reform**

- **In its 2021 Resolution on the Joint Programme, ECOSOC recognised the relevance of the unique model of UNAIDS as the only cosponsored Joint Programme of the UN system - with a common vision and strategy; a unified budget, results and accountability framework which guides the Joint Programme actions in support of national responses. This is seen as a valuable experience for UN reform going forward.**

- UNAIDS Board remains the only UN governing body that includes civil society namely people living with and most affected by HIV as members and their role was explicitly recognised by ECOSOC.
- **The Joint Programme's strength lies in its ability to address AIDS in an integrated way, from multiple perspectives, and through multiple sectors, drawing on the expertise of UNICEF and the other Cosponsoring organizations as well as the Secretariat of UNAIDS.**

### **A broader approach to Pandemics responses tackling inequalities to end AIDS**

- **2021 has been a challenging year for our work. The global HIV response, which was already off track before COVID-19, is now under even greater strain as the COVID-19 crisis continues to impact, disrupting HIV prevention and treatment services, schooling, violence-prevention programmes, and more.**
- Still, at the onset of the COVID19 pandemic outbreak, the UNAIDS Joint Programme quickly mobilized itself to lend and continues lending its help to the global response to COVID19, to protect the gains in the AIDS response, keeping people living with HIV under treatment and sustaining the HIV prevention activities.
- UNAIDS is supporting countries and partners to simplify and adapt HIV services, from prevention to care and support, in ways that both serve the needs of people living with HIV better and reduce unnecessary burdens on the health system.
- 2021 was a year where the relevance of the lessons learned from the response to HIV for future pandemic preparedness became clearer and were put into practice in a number of countries, where leaders of the AIDS response were logically also being asked to lead various parts of the response to COVID-19. Allow me to highlight five key areas:
  - Human rights at the centre
  - Community-based infrastructure
  - Equitable access to medicines, vaccines & health technologies
  - Supporting workers on the front lines
  - People-centred data systems

### **UNAIDS Secretariat alignment**

- **As requested by member states in the QCPR, efforts are on across cosponsors and the UNAIDS Secretariat to align our human and financial resources.**
- I would like to draw this Boards attention to discussions at the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board and with stakeholders in a structured funding dialogue last year with concerns that this alignment is not only driven by the priorities of the strategy, but sadly also by financial considerations and a reality where the resources available to the Joint Programme are far from commensurate with the level of ambition of the Strategy.
- This financial reality has been impacting the capacity of cosponsors and the Secretariat for a number of years, even if the annual budget of the Unified, Budget Results and Accountability Framework approved for 2022 is a relatively modest USD 210 million or roughly 1 per cent of the annual global investment in the AIDS response.
- Specifically, for the UNAIDS Secretariat, we are implementing an organizational alignment to ensure that the Secretariat is aligned with the priorities in the strategy, efficient, and that it contributes to a UNAIDS Joint Programme that is aligned with the UN Reform but can continue to be at the reform forefront.

### **Urging renewed commitment to be back on track**

- **With less than 10 years to achieve the sustainable development goals, it is urgent that we tackle the inequalities that are driving the AIDS pandemic. The Global AIDS Strategy is providing exactly that focus: addressing the inequalities of an epidemic where 2/3 of all new infections annually are within key populations and their sexual partners.**
- **We have to redouble efforts and meet the 2025 targets – and also place particular attention on prevention of mother-to child transmission, Paediatric and adolescent treatment, and adolescent prevention**
- **The continued engagement of UNICEF will be essential to achieving these targets and to this effect, UNAIDS welcomes that UNICEF has included HIV in the Strategic Plan. But there is need to do more on HIV and this would also require mobilizing additional resources for their AIDS-related work, as envisaged in the UBRAF, as part of their broader engagement under Agenda 2030. It is critical that**

**donors recognise this and support this work in addition to the core UBRAF contributions provided to UNAIDS.**

- **We look forward to working closely with UNICEF on the Education Plus initiative and the Transforming Education Summit scheduled for September this year.**
- **Echoing the call in the report submitted to this Executive Board, Ending AIDS remains integral to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and this has to include placing mothers, children and adolescents living with and affected by HIV at the centre of the work of UNICEF, its partners and stakeholders**

**As the UNAIDS Executive Director said “We know how to beat AIDS and we know how to beat pandemics. “We cannot accept that tens of thousands of children still become infected with HIV and die from AIDS-related illnesses every year. We can do better. We must do better”. “We know how to save lives and stop new HIV infections among children”.**

**Thank you.**