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## 2014 UBRAF thematic report

### Coordination, coherence and partnerships

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## ACHIEVEMENTS

Close collaboration was maintained throughout the year between the UNAIDS Secretariat and cosponsors' global coordinators and focal points. A Joint Programme Retreat with this group, held in October in Vienna, resulted in the reconfirmation of commitment to the Joint Programme and the development of ways to strengthen the partnership after 2015. The inclusive governance model has also enabled dialogue between affected communities, governments and the United Nations (UN), ensuring progressive global policy-setting and ambitious global targets informed by evidence and country realities.

The value of the lessons learnt from the unique approach of the Joint Programme were highlighted in the 2013 United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) resolution, citing the Joint Programme as a useful example of good practice for the rest of the UN to enhance strategic coherence, coordination and results after 2015.

The AIDS response continues to demonstrate the power of public–private partnerships. In 2014 UNAIDS, the Clinton Health Access Initiative, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund), the Government of the United States of America and Roche negotiated a landmark global agreement to reduce the cost of the leading viral load testing technology by at least 40%. Countries are already expanding access to this essential diagnostic tool, and the new price is expected to save at least US\$ 150 million over the next 5 years. The UNAIDS Executive Director and the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) co-chaired a panel to improve access to high-quality low-cost medicines and promote domestic production through renewed public–private partnerships.

Drawing on household-based surveys, it is possible to map locations of greatest burden and need, which in turn enables resources to be allocated as efficiently as possible. UNAIDS is making effective use of these data, enabling the Global Fund, the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and other partners and countries to use location–population approaches to invest funds where they are most needed and to monitor results in real time. In 2014 the UNAIDS Executive Director promoted strategic investment approaches for domestic and international spending and financial sustainability transition plans to augment local investment in responses, demonstrating economic returns on investment up to 15 times higher than the investments required. The UNAIDS Secretariat, the World Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Global Fund are working together to increase effectiveness of AIDS investments, with focus on taking AIDS out of isolation in financing and policy.

UNAIDS supported 45 country HIV or HIV/TB concept notes for the new funding model of the Global Fund, totalling more than US\$ 5 billion.

At the country level, UNAIDS provided extensive technical assistance to ensure HIV national plans are in place, resources are available, approaches are integrated and decentralized, and local capacities are improved. UNAIDS is actively participating in three technical support coordination groups in order to ensure strong collaboration among

partners in supporting countries to leverage the Global Fund processes. The technical support facilities and regional support teams assisted over 60 countries through 125 technical support assignments under the new funding model in 2014.

Additionally, the investment approach resulted in significant adjustments to national strategies and programmes, improved efficiencies, and better-focused and prioritized concept notes. UNAIDS and the technical support facilities supported over 40 countries in developing their HIV investment cases from 2013 to 2014, with more than half completing these.

UNAIDS support to investment frameworks in 2014 focused mainly on providing or facilitating training for consultants and stakeholders; sharing expertise for the gathering and analysis of epidemiological data, and for modelling and resource-tracking; and assisting with sustainable financing analysis and with the review and quality assessment of investment case documents. An independent review of HIV investment cases was conducted in 2014 to improve guidance and support to countries adopting the investment approach, and highlighted the importance of achieving and safeguarding country ownership and leadership in the process.

Close collaboration was maintained throughout 2014 between the UNAIDS Secretariat and cosponsors' global coordinators and focal points. UNAIDS also continues to coordinate closely with PEPFAR to help countries implement an investment approach in national planning processes and ensure that the new PEPFAR 3.0 strategy is aligned to global priorities. In addition, the inclusive governance model has enabled dialogue between affected communities, governments and the UN, ensuring progressive global policy-setting and ambitious global targets informed by evidence and country realities.

The AIDS response has demonstrated the importance of addressing pervasive social, legal and economic inequities in order to empower women and girls to protect themselves from HIV infection and to be able to freely access essential HIV and sexual and reproductive health services. Gender assessments were implemented in over 30 countries across regions, with close collaboration with members of the Joint Programme and the Global Fund, using the UNAIDS Gender Assessment Tool to assess countries' epidemic, context and responses from a gender perspective, inputting strategic recommendations in national processes (national strategic plan reviews and development) and Global Fund concept notes.

UNAIDS has continued to implement the Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV in more than 90 countries and produced strategic guidance on gender and HIV, focusing on addressing the findings of the 2012 mid-term review of the Agenda. More than 700 civil society organizations are implementing the agenda. By supporting women's rights organizations and networks of women living with HIV, UNAIDS has supported women living with HIV to highlight the links between HIV and gender-based violence and increased their access to justice.

Throughout 2014 the UNAIDS Secretariat strengthened partnerships with civil society and

spearheaded several initiatives in collaboration with them. This included work to advance treatment prevention, non-discrimination and gender equality targets; Fast-Track initiatives, youth and community participation and service delivery; and work on global retargeting and support from faith leaders on human rights and advocacy for the Sustainable Development Goals.

The UNAIDS Secretariat also led UN engagement with faith-based organizations to address the Ebola epidemic and to provide technical support on the development of a strategy and community engagement guidelines in Ebola vaccine clinical trials and inputs for a safe and dignified burial protocol.

## **MAJOR CHALLENGES AND HOW THESE WERE ADDRESSED**

The rollout of the new funding model of the Global Fund in over 60 countries brought with it the challenge of ensuring regional and country offices were in a position to support countries with technical inputs. Countries encountered issues navigating through the concept note development process, and technical support facilities were faced with a large number of complex requests. Human rights, gender equality and community mobilization components included in the concept notes could have been stronger.

Country offices faced constraints in their support of investment case development due to limited data availability and lack of political commitment to prioritization, efficiency and sustainability. A process review found that applying the investment approach, or “operationalizing” the investment framework, has encountered issues and challenges. One of the main challenges is to establish an effective quality assurance and control system at the regional and headquarters level for work on the investment approach and Global Fund concept notes.

Although the prevention agenda has gained some momentum, funding for prevention seems to have declined globally and the prevention components of recent Global Fund concept notes and PEPFAR country operational plans could have been stronger. Prevention currently lacks strong demand and outspoken champions. It is hoped that the setting of prevention-specific programmatic targets will strengthen in-country commitments.

## **KEY FUTURE INTERVENTIONS**

Coordinated action and strong partnerships are the only route to achieving the collective goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. As we face challenges associated with ageing populations, the youth bulge in Africa, the growth of middle-income countries and the changing landscape of development, lessons from the AIDS response should drive the uptake of holistic approaches that address the social, political and economic determinants of ill health and poverty. Placing people at the centre of development, forging innovative partnerships and democratizing problem-solving through inclusive governance

mechanisms are also essential.

Planned actions for 2015 include:

- organizing a series of consultations with partners to invite views and inputs towards the updated UNAIDS strategy;
- supporting gap analysis in the 30 Fast-Track countries, operationalization of Fast-Track, developing partnerships, city action plans and a joint publication with UN Habitat;
- continuing to strengthen the relationship with the new PEPFAR leadership and staff, leveraging efforts in specific regions and countries and troubleshooting in relation to bottlenecks;
- spearheading work on financing for community mobilization, helping define why this funding is crucial, how it contributes to the goal of ending AIDS and how the needed financing can be achieved;
- convening civil society organizations working on HIV, health, social justice, women's rights and post-2015 to maintain support for the inclusion of ending the AIDS epidemic in the Sustainable Development Goals;
- coordinating UNAIDS participation and advocacy messages for the Commission on the Status of Women and the Commission on Population and Development agendas and outcomes to reflect UNAIDS objectives;
- continuing to strengthen capacities to support country processes and improve coordination among UNAIDS' relevant partners to fill the gaps, following the recommendations of the independent review of HIV investment cases, especially regarding service delivery models and options, costing and budgeting, and ways to enhance technical and other forms of efficiency;
- collaboration to further enhance coordination mechanisms, information-sharing and mutual accountability, following the UNAIDS and Global Fund Cooperation Agreement. Areas earmarked for improved cooperation include strengthening strategic investments, jointly leveraging political commitment, and supporting meaningful country dialogues with all stakeholders—including civil society and communities—to ensure AIDS responses are inclusive and achieve maximum impact;
- using the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China, South Africa) partnership, including China–Africa synergies, to support local production in Africa; to guide AIDS policies in Russia; to implement the UNAIDS strategy on access to commodity; to encourage partnerships on intellectual property issues established with specific reference to middle-income countries; to guide and contribute to UNAIDS work on pharmaceuticals; and
- using H4+ work to integrate HIV into World Health Organization (WHO) guidance documents on community engagement in reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health; developing a literacy guide for women living with HIV on reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health services; and developing training modules for health-care workers on stigma and discrimination.

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