

PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD

UNAIDS/PCB(31)/12.21

Issue date: 29 November 2012

THIRTY-FIRST MEETING

DATE: 11-13 December 2012

VENUE: Executive Board Room, WHO, Geneva

Agenda item 5

Results of the Review of NGO/Civil Society participation in the Programme Coordinating Board

Document prepared by the Programme Coordinating Board Bureau

Additional documents for this item:

Independent Review (full report): NGO/Civil Society Participation in the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS: UNAIDS/PCB (31)/12.CRP.3.

Action required at this meeting – Recalling the decisions 7.2, 7.3, 7.6 and 7.7 of its 23rd meeting, **the Programme Coordinating Board is requested to:**

18. *Take note* of the report of the independent consultant and recognize the important contribution of civil society to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board and in the global response to HIV.
19. *Call* on Member States to involve representatives of civil society in their national delegations to the Programme Coordinating Board and to facilitate input from and feedback to civil society on PCB agenda items and decisions; and to *work* with the NGO Delegation and UNAIDS to strengthen communication, between all constituencies, in particular between PCB Meetings.
20. *Request* UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors to strengthen their collaboration at country, regional and headquarters levels with the NGO Delegation including in cosponsors governing boards; to *continue* the support to the NGO Delegation through the most cost effective approaches including induction of new delegates and the Communications Facility; and to *champion*, in collaboration with Member States, the involvement of civil society in wider global health and development frameworks, in particular the post 2015 agenda.
21. *Call* on The Programme Coordinating Board NGO delegation to respond to the changing global environment and likely post-MDG agenda by developing more systematic and strategic relationships with civil society leaders and delegations of other key HIV mechanisms, especially the Global Fund; and wider health and development initiatives; to *strengthen* its accountability and outreach to wider civil society in countries and regions; and to *explore* cost effective approaches to build capacity and ensure the institutional memory within the NGO Delegation.

Cost implications for decisions:

The recommendations do not require additional financial resources, although some may require changes to allocations of, or the more efficient use of, existing budgets.

BACKGROUND

1. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) is the first UN programme to have civil society formally represented on its governing body, the Programme Coordinating Board. The contribution of PCB NGO representatives, which also includes People Living with HIV and key affected communities, has been instrumental in the effective inclusion of community voices in the key global policy forum on AIDS.
2. A review of civil society participation at the Programme Coordinating Board was conducted in 2007 at the request of the delegation and presented to the Board at its 20th meeting. At this same meeting, the Programme Coordinating Board agreed to review the participation of the NGO Programme Coordinating Board Delegation in the Programme Coordinating Board within no more than five years.
3. The overall purpose of the 2012 review was to: assess the NGO Delegation's participation in and contribution to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board; and recommend forward-looking actions (including any financial implications) for increasing the engagement and impact of civil society voices on the Board. It was based on Terms of Reference (TORs) provided by UNAIDS¹. The Review addressed the five year period since the previous Independent Review of NGO/Civil Society in the UNAIDS PCB in 2006/7².
4. An Independent Consultant was selected to conduct the Review, following a competitive selection process. The PCB Bureau serving as the Oversight Committee approved the selection of Sarah Middleton-Lee to conduct the Review. In response to the TORs, the Consultant developed an inception report³, identifying the actions and methodologies to be undertaken, which was approved by the Oversight Committee. The Review was managed by the Governance and Multilateral Affairs Department of the UNAIDS Secretariat, Geneva.
5. The Review did not aim to comprehensively record the full activities and results of the NGO Delegation, but, instead, to identify and analyse key examples, issues and trends. It also did not aim to assess civil society participation in wider UNAIDS processes beyond the PCB.
6. The 2012 Review used five complementary methodologies:
 - i. Key stakeholder interviews. A total of 33 interviews were carried out with representatives of: Member States; Cosponsoring Organisations

¹ Terms of Reference: Consultant: 2012 Review of NGO/Civil Society Participation in the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, UNAIDS, June 2012.

² Independent Review: NGO/Civil Society Participation in the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS, Sarah Middleton-Lee, March 2007.

³ Inception Report: 2012 Review of NGO/Civil Society Participation in the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Sarah Middleton-Lee, September 2012.

- (Cosponsors); UNAIDS Secretariat; past/present NGO Delegates and the Communications Facility; and wider civil society.
- ii. Focus group discussion with current NGO Delegation. A discussion was carried out with 6 members of the current NGO delegation.
 - iii. E-survey among wider civil society. An e-survey for all civil society organisations involved in HIV (at community, national, regional or global levels) was developed in four languages. A total of 318 responses were received (161 in English, 72 Russian, 45 Spanish and 40 French).
 - iv. Desk review. A review was carried out of over 70 documents relating to the PCB (such as its Modus Operandi and meeting reports); NGO Delegation (such as its TORs, Delegates Manual and NGO Reports); and UNAIDS Programme (such as its Second Independent Evaluation (SIE), 2011-2015 Strategy and Strategic Investment Framework).
 - v. Observation of the context: The Consultant observed a telephone briefing between an NGO Delegate and civil society constituents in Europe. She was also given access to examples of internal communication within the NGO Delegation, such as e-mail exchanges.
7. The full review, “Independent Review: NGO/Civil Society Participation in the Programme Coordinating Board of UNAIDS” (Review), will be made available as a conference paper at the 31st meeting as well as on the UNAIDS website at:
http://www.unaids.org/en/media/unaids/contentassets/documents/pcb/2012/20121116_PCB31_Review_Civil_Society_Participation_in_UNAIDS_Final_en.pdf. It includes an executive summary, timeframe, methodology, names and number of informants interviewed, key findings, conclusions, and full recommendations.

CONCLUSIONS FROM THE REVIEW

8. The 2012 Review of NGO/Civil Society Participation in the UNAIDS PCB produced a wealth of findings. As a summary, the Independent Consultant draws the following conclusions:
9. **Civil society participation continues to be universally welcomed as an important principle and valued asset of the UNAIDS PCB.** While some Members States question the *degree* and *nature* of participation that is appropriate, all stakeholders in the 2012 Review acknowledged that civil society brings value-added to UNAIDS governance – in particular providing a vital reality check through the voices of those living with and most affected by HIV. There is regret that – as hoped by some when UNAIDS was established – civil society participation has not become a more common practice within the governance of other United Nations mechanisms.

10. **Civil society participation has maintained a high profile on the PCB agenda. The resulting decision points – notably at the 20th, 23rd and 25th Meetings - remain valid. However, while some have been effectively implemented and led to concrete results, others have received only partial or no follow-up.**

Some of the resulting decision points – such as to establish the NGO Delegation's Communications Facility⁴ - have been fulfilled and demonstrated positive impact on the degree and quality of civil society participation. However, others – such as the inclusion of civil society representatives in Member State Delegations⁵ and coordination between UNAIDS Regional Support Teams and regional NGO Delegates⁶ - have not been fully actioned. Meanwhile, some PCB recommendations – such as to develop a distinct and measurable UNAIDS Partnership Strategy for work with both civil society and PLHIV⁷ – have received follow-up in a different manner to that indicated by the wording of the original PCB decision.

11. **Since 2006/7, the NGO Delegation has developed a stronger identity – with a strategy focused on championing the rights and needs of PLHIV and key affected communities.** The majority of stakeholders welcome this focus, even where it challenges their own politics and positions. However, some Member States feel that it is insensitive to national cultures and specificities and risks neglecting other important aspects of a comprehensive response to HIV.

12. **The NGO Delegation plays a vital watchdog role - monitoring and, as necessary, pushing issues and agenda items of relevance to civil society that risk slipping off the agenda.** The NGO Delegation has shown persistence in ensuring that key PCB decision points – such as relating to technical support and the UNAIDS Partnership Strategy – are brought back to the table and receive appropriate attention. It has made good use of the opportunities available to it, for example show-casing civil society priorities (such as stigma and discrimination and HIV and the legal environment) in PCB thematic sessions.

13. **The NGO Delegation has made an increasingly important contribution to the overall strategic, administrative and accountability frameworks of UNAIDS.** It has played an active role in trying to ensure that the frameworks for UNAIDS – such as the 2011-2015 Strategy and UBRAF – are evidence-based, respond the needs of civil society and enable the Programme to be held to account.

14. **The NGO delegation has significantly improved the scale, quality and,**

4 Decision 9.1. Decisions, Recommendations and Conclusions, 20th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Geneva, Switzerland, 25-27 June 2007.

5 Decision 7.2. Decisions, Recommendations and Conclusions, 23rd Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Geneva, Switzerland, 15-17 December 2008.

6 Decisions 7.6 and 7.7. Decisions, Recommendations and Conclusions, 23rd Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Geneva, Switzerland, 15-17 December 2008.

7 Decision 4.24. Decisions, Recommendations and Conclusions, 25th Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, Geneva, Switzerland, 8-10 December 2009.

ultimately, influence of its work – through enhanced systems, an expanded evidence-base and stronger cohesion. This reflects both the commitment of its members and the work of the Communications Facility – which has proven a sound investment. The Communications Facility has made a major contribution to a 'seismic shift' seen in the NGO Delegation's efficiency and effectiveness. It has, in particular, supported the group to: develop systems (such as for Delegate selection and accountability); improve communication tools (such as its website and communiqué); enhance consultation processes (such as through using e-surveys and focus group discussions to gather evidence); and generally work more professionally. The Communications Facility has proved a good investment of UNAIDS resources. It is likely that a reduction in its funding will reduce the scale of support that it can provide and, in turn, limit the quantity and quality of the NGO Delegation's work.

15. **Aspects of the NGO Delegation's work still need further development, notably their outreach and accountability to wider regional civil society and some key constituencies.** Despite some members' impressive efforts to build their constituencies, the Delegation as a whole needs to invest further time and systems in ensuring that it has a wide and comprehensive reach to civil society stakeholders in the countries and regions that they represent. They also need to ensure that they have institutional relations with the leadership of priority constituency groups (such as key affected communities), especially if such groups are not currently directly represented on the Delegation.
16. **The NGO delegation has a more difficult - but also more crucial - role than ever within the changing and challenging environment for HIV. It must take proactive and strategic action to meet that challenge and play a catalytic and leadership role within the PCB.** Within a resource-constrained and, in some regions, increasingly conservative context, the voice of civil society will be vital. This includes in terms of ensuring that investment-based approaches to HIV acknowledge the rights and needs of those most affected and that, while maximising technical developments, appropriate attention is paid to the 'critical enablers' (such as the legal environment) that 'make or break' effective responses. The NGO Delegation's roles will include holding Member States to account for the 2011 Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS and mobilising UNAIDS and its PCB to play a full leadership role that secures effective positioning of HIV within the post-MDG agenda.
17. **Going forward, the NGO delegation needs to strengthen its strategic partnerships with other leaders in civil society, both within and external to the HIV field.** The Delegation needs to work more closely and systematically with other civil society leaders involved in HIV (especially the delegations to the Board of the Global Fund). It also – in the light of HIV being integrated into wider responses to health – needs to enhance its outreach to civil society advocates

and representatives to other global health and development institutions.

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE REVIEW

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