

## Press release

### Highlights from the meeting of the 23rd UNAIDS governing board

*The Programme Coordinating Board pays tribute to Dr Peter Piot and welcomes the appointment of Mr Michel Sidibé as next Executive Director of UNAIDS*

**Geneva, 18 December 2008** – The governing body of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) met in Geneva, Switzerland from 15-17 December for the 23rd Meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB).

Under the current PCB chair, the United States of America, the meeting was attended by more than 300 participants and observers from UN Member States, international organizations, civil society, and nongovernmental organizations.

This was Dr Peter Piot's last board meeting as Executive Director of UNAIDS. The PCB paid tribute for his leadership and acknowledged his many accomplishments, from placing and maintaining AIDS on the global political agenda and mobilizing significant resources for AIDS to establishing alliances across a range of sectors and actors.

In his remarks to the Board, Dr Piot reflected on the response and the changes he has witnessed since UNAIDS began in 1996. "AIDS has been a powerful agent for change from exposing to overcoming injustices," said Dr Piot. "Thanks to AIDS, issues around the health workforce crisis, health systems crisis, human rights issues, gay rights issues, women's rights issues, and gender-based violence are all on the agenda".

The PCB welcomed the appointment of Mr Michel Sidibé as the incoming UNAIDS Executive Director. Dr Piot urged the Board to give Mr Sidibé the same support that he has received.

In his response, Mr Sidibé applauded Dr Piot's leadership and commended his passion and vision. Mr Sidibé also spoke on his priorities going forward, including ushering in a new era of accountability, addressing stigma and discrimination and delivering on human rights, and sustaining investments. "It is time to put our collective wisdom together so that we can move decisively, with a clear focus on results, on action, delivery and effectiveness," said Mr Sidibé.

Significant policy issues discussed at the PCB meeting included: HIV-specific restrictions on entry, stay and residence; gender-sensitivity of AIDS responses; civil society involvement in the PCB; and UNAIDS' Unified Budget and Workplan.

#### **Overview of key agenda items, outcomes, and recommendations:**

- **HIV-specific restrictions on entry, stay and residence**

The Board strongly encourages all countries to eliminate HIV-specific restrictions on entry, stay and residence and ensure that people living with HIV are no longer excluded, detained or deported on the basis of HIV status. Building on a previous decision, the Board decided that no PCB meeting will be held in a country that imposes HIV-specific

restrictions related to entry, stay or residence based on a person's HIV status. UNAIDS is requested to provide a progress report to the next PCB meeting on efforts made to implement the Task Team's recommendations.

- **Gender-sensitivity and guidance in the AIDS response**

The Board requested that UNAIDS prepare a progress report for the 24th PCB meeting detailing the work of UNAIDS in assisting countries in developing gender equality including needs assessments for women and girls and for lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities separately, emphasizing country level action, as well as follow-up actions, including the establishment of an inter-agency strategy to address HIV and women and girls in line with the strategy undertaken with lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender populations.

- **Civil society involvement in the PCB**

The Board encouraged Member States to consider the possibility of involving, in a capacity they deem appropriate, one or more representatives of civil society, including people living with HIV and affected communities, within their national delegations to PCB meetings, and recommends that the UNAIDS Secretariat, country offices and Regional Support Teams explore and identify ways to support Member States to involve civil society in their delegations.

- **Thematic session on partnership between UNAIDS and the Global Fund**

The thematic session of the 23rd meeting focused on the relationship between UNAIDS and the Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and issues of linkages with the international technical support architecture and public-private partnerships.

- **UNAIDS' Unified Budget and Workplan**

The PCB received a report on the implementation of UNAIDS' Unified Budget and Workplan (UBW) that highlighted the activities of UNAIDS for 2006-2007. The PCB urges all countries to provide adequate resources to fully fund the 2008-2009 UBW and commit to implementation of the strategic framework for 2007-2011.

- **Election of officers**

The PCB has elected for a one-year term Ethiopia as the Chair, the Netherlands as the Vice-Chair, and Guatemala will continue as Rapporteur of the PCB, beginning 1 January 2009.

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UNAIDS is an innovative joint venture of the United Nations, bringing together the efforts and resources of the UNAIDS Secretariat and ten UN system organizations in the AIDS response. The Secretariat headquarters is in Geneva, Switzerland—with staff on the ground in more than 80 countries. Coherent action on AIDS by the UN system is coordinated in countries through UN theme groups, and joint programmes on AIDS. UNAIDS' Cosponsors include UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, ILO, UNESCO, WHO and the World Bank. Visit the UNAIDS Web site at [www.unaids.org](http://www.unaids.org)