

UNAIDS Second Independent Evaluation
Oversight Committee

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STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP ON DRAFT INCEPTION REPORT
15-16 September 2008
Geneva

Summary of Proceedings

(Agenda, List of Participants, and Presentations Attached)

Plenary Session 1: 15 September (13:30 – 15:30)

Catherine Hodgkin, Chair of the Oversight Committee (OC) welcomed the participants, outlined the format and agenda and stated the objectives of the Workshop, namely to present the Inception Report (IR) to a broad range of stakeholders; ensure the IR will achieve the Evaluation purpose; inform the Evaluation Team and provide suggestions to strengthen methodology of the design; and involve stakeholders to reinforce support for the evaluation and understanding of the material of the Final Report.

Paul De Lay, Director, Evaluation, Monitoring and Policy Department, UNAIDS Secretariat, outlined the background for the SIE. (Slide presentation attached.)

Steve Kraus, Cosponsor Liaison Official, outlined the importance of the Evaluation for the Cosponsors and their support of the process.

Derek Poate, Evaluation Team Leader (ETL), introduced the Evaluation Team, and presented the draft Inception Report to the participants. (Slide presentation attached.)

A wide range of issues and questions, taken at random, were raised as set out in the following blocks, to which the Chair and ETL responded.

Block 1:

Issues and Questions

- involvement and funding of civil society
- engagement with OECD DAC

- role of UNAIDS at country level and evaluation of staff
- coordination issues and research
- research paper of the African Group presented to the 20th PCB on issues such as impact, why there has been little progress, why instruments are not working
- prevention, care and support
- definitions of stakeholder groups and clarity at country level of who should be involved in the evaluation
- country selection – high prevalence country in Southern Africa

Response:

The ETL noted their intention to include civil society, and welcomed practical suggestions from the participants to go beyond traditional entry points. He was familiar with the African paper that contained important insights. He took note of comments on country selection noting the links with criteria. The terms of reference from the PCB did not include impact assessment; rather they would look at outcomes. The evaluation would look at overall performance at country level, regional and global level and would include staffing issues. He noted the need for careful definitions.

The OC Chair noted that within available funds for the Workshop clear selection criteria for financial support for civil society and Member States were followed, based on known practice of PCB funding of meetings.

Block 2:

Issues and Questions:

- governance and accountability
- need for multi-sector approach
- build on existing material and evaluations
- indicators are difficult
- difficulty of attribution in assessing impact
- draft IR sound overall – clear, understandable
- value of civil society and issue of voting rights on the PCB
- ways of using NGO resources to gather information and feed into Evaluation data base – NGO delegation willing to provide contact outside “usual suspects”
- many issues known – key questions are how UNAIDS functions and is it fit for the future?
- need to address “drivers” of the epidemic – difficult groups such as drug users, sex workers
- UNAIDS not the biggest funder but can take lead in normative work
- relevance of ECOSOC objectives
- next steps in process of the Evaluation

- cooperation with the Global Fund and their evaluations – exchange and share data and methodologies – can share points and benchmarking

Response:

ETL took note of concern with indicators, and issues of impact assessments. He welcomed the offers of cooperation from the NGOs and Global Fund. He stressed that the approach of the evaluation is forward-looking. He agreed with the importance of looking at the “drivers” of the epidemic, including drug users. The ECOSOC mandate is part of the evaluation.

The OC Chair confirmed that the approved IR will be posted on the SIE webpage, along with the presentations and a summary of proceedings from the Workshop. A second stakeholder workshop on the draft Evaluation Report will be considered by the OC.

Block 3

Questions and Issues:

- indicators – how to strengthen
- south to south cooperation
- harm reduction
- overall purpose of evaluation - value for money – DAC guidelines
- administration versus programming
- resource-based outcomes
- gender balance of evaluation teams for country visits
- out of centre visits in country studies
- UNAIDS support for monitoring and evaluation
- consideration of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in country selection
- accountability
- coordination
- HIV in developed as well as developing countries
- how to deal with governance in countries
- suggestion for web-based survey
- how well are we doing? Shed light on doing things right and doing the right thing
- clarification of UNAIDS as both Cosponsors and Secretariat
- country visits – presently structured to look at supply side (Division of Labour) – need to look at demand side, i.e. what is needed

Response:

The ETL agreed with the comments on value for money. PNG will be considered in the overall selection of countries. The ET has a pool of national consultants for country studies and gender balance is one important consideration. The ET intends to spend time

out of the capitals in country visits. The evaluation has taken on board doing “right things right”. Definitions will be clarified and precise.

The plenary session adjourned for break-out into four Study Groups (SG). All Study Groups were asked to take into account cross-cutting themes relating to inclusion, gender and vulnerable groups.

Plenary Session 2: 16 September (14:00-17:00)

The plenary reconvened to discuss reports from the Study Groups, and the response from the Evaluation Team Leader, and OC Chair. As there were three rapporteurs for each SG, one presented the conclusions, with additional comments from the other two. The main presentation is outlined in the attached slides. The following notes related to the subsequent discussion.

SG1: How UNAIDS is responding to the changing context:

- need for guidelines on policy at country level
- incentives for staff to coordinate a key element
- better mechanisms to unite the groups at country level
- no clear categories for judging health systems – eg. treatment, delivery systems
- importance of faith-based delivery
- Secretariat and Cosponsors share objectives, but trust not so strong
- need to look at the place for UNAIDS – context and architecture has changed

SG2: How UNAIDS works

- strengths of governance – well-defined mandate – global leadership
- weakness – lack of flexibility on human rights issues - accountability of cosponsors
- need to assess UBW – flexible form of funding – how are Cosponsors using it
- Division of Labour – Cosponsors have sharper focus
- need to look at different levels – gaps at regional, national levels
- role of PCB

SG3: How UNAIDS is fulfilling its ECOSOC mandate on gender, human rights, and supporting active engagement of civil society including PLHIV.

- prevention is not mentioned in the study group questions and should be one of the key areas
- need practical tools
- terminology needs clarification – “rights-based approach”
- UCC work plans
- financial allocations at country level
- support and engage civil society

SG4: How UNAIDS is fulfilling its ECOSOC mandate on coordination and provision of technical support to national AIDS responses – greatest success and lessons learned.

- is UNAIDS bringing in difficult-to-reach groups in civil society
- is money getting to the community – outcomes and impact
- leadership – develop national policies
- harmonize Cosponsors

The Chair opened the floor for general discussion, asking participants to suggest ideas on where the ET should focus and any additional points or comments.

- multisector support (e.g. social services, labour issues, economic conditions) is required for health system strengthening – Cosponsors represent many of the areas
- the evaluation is issue-driven – need to get the issues right:
 - how UNAIDS positions itself in health and HIV AIDS – how to establish synergies with health systems
 - issues related to ECOSOC mandate need to be spelled out more clearly
 - evaluation framework – issues deal with relevance – make sure the right issues are covered
- diversity of experience at country level – schedule visits outside the capitals
- where will UNAIDS be in 5 years? – will it exist and be effective?
- look at AIDS architecture and relevance of ECOSOC
- children and HIV not covered
- impact of technical support and proliferation of technical assistance on national governments – look at implementation of national strategies and plans – why is it weak? technical assistance is given at national, not community level – is the money doing the work intended?

A member of the Oversight Committee presented her views on the issues, in particular the future of UNAIDS and the paradoxes between prevention, treatment, and care.

The response from the ETL included the following points, noting with interest the discussions and the extensive information from the Workshop:

1. Country studies:

- a) There was a wide range of advice, somewhat conflicting, on how to meet the criteria and fill in gaps. There were limitations on the budget – can not go both deep and wide. The ET will consult with the OC who have the final decision.
2. Written comments received:
 - a) Have added value, responded to the terms of reference, and extended the diversity of interests.
3. Wider thematic points:
 - a) Use of terminology and precision in use:
 - i) faith-based – will consider reference language
 - ii) gender/human rights – recognize they are not the same and require separate treatment
 - iii) issues of relevance, effectiveness – will draw points out
 - b) Need to look at overall architecture of support:
 - i) the ET will outline how context has changed – it is part of the review of the ECOSOC mandate to assess if the objectives, as worded, are appropriate.
 - c) Language and interpretation – processes are taken for granted but not understood by everyone in the same way – language used is interpreted differently – affects the way the questions are asked to informants.
 - d) Levels – evaluation is not looking at levels in isolation, but how they are linked – important to look outside “usual suspects” to excluded groups and to engage at grass roots level.
 - e) ECOSOC – not new to look at it – much useful analysis has been done which has identified the issues – need to focus on bottlenecks and why they occur – recommendations from other studies have not been taken up.
 - f) Behaviour change – at local level – not always reflected at global intentions – look at incentives, leadership, resources – implementation of division of labour.
 - g) Look at example of “deep throat” advice – “follow the money” – see where the resources go and how they are spent.
 - h) Terms of reference – ETL did not see anything in the discussions to change these and the ET will work within them.

4. Next steps – finalize country selection and revise Inception Report.

The ETL noted that the discussions reinforced the complexity of the evaluation and how a diverse group of stakeholders provide interest and information for it.

Paul De Lay (Secretariat) noted the Workshop was incredibly fruitful and would help the ET to finalize the Inception Report, which was almost there. He thanked the OC for their diligent work in providing management guidance, and assuring the credibility and independence of the evaluation. The Secretariat is ready to provide all necessary assistance and has established a focal point system to work with the ET to better inform in analysis and issues. The results of the Evaluation will guide the new Executive Director (EXD) and Senior Management Team (SMT).

Steve Kraus (Cosponsor Liaison Official) noted the Workshop was a good opportunity to factor the issues out and to simplify them. He noted that all 10 Cosponsors had attended the meeting with representation from both Global Coordinators and Focal Points. Much of UNAIDS has become decentralized to regional level, which should be consulted. The Cosponsors support the evaluation and they will work with the ET. He thanked the OC for their work.

The Chair noted the importance of stakeholder involvement for credibility of the evaluation, and was grateful for the excellent response and active participation. The OC will continue to keep communication and consultations on the evaluation at the top of their agenda.

On next steps, she indicated that written comments on country selection should be submitted by 19 September, but comments on other aspects of the Inception Report could be made up until 26 September. The Inception Report will be revised by the ET and approved by the OC about mid-October. The final version will be posted on the SIE website. The OC will also report to the PCB in December 2008 on progress on the Evaluation. She asked participants to fill in the evaluation forms so that the OC can consider comments in the event of another workshop.

The meeting adjourned at 17:00.