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**Comments on the 2008-2009 Unified Budget and Workplan  
Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework**

This paper presents comments on the 2008-2009 UBW Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework from several UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) members states, namely: Canada, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

The primary purpose of the 2008-2009 UBW Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is to strengthen results-based management and accountability across UNAIDS and – as requested by the PCB at its 20<sup>th</sup> meeting in June 2007 – enable tracking of linkages between investments and results. The Framework will serve as a tool for monitoring and assessing the results of UNAIDS efforts and incorporates a mid-term review of the UBW – also requested by the PCB – which will enable performance-based allocation of funds, and enhance organizational learning.

## **I. Comments from Canada**

### **– Received by the UNAIDS Secretariat on 23 November 2007**

This Framework calls for some streamlining, simplification and a more strategic and operationally driven approach. In its current format, it is overwhelming and likely to **be** a challenge to integrate into UNAIDS and Cosponsor plans, operations and decision making processes. As this framework intends to bring together the efforts of 10 individual agencies in the area of AIDS, the plan should better reflect that in a strategic manner.

In order to get more clarity, and given the proposed framework appears to **be** an attempt to simplify previously existing approaches, it would be interesting to see an annex that provides those. The plan should include a rationale as to how the simplification was done with a view to address the objectives listed on page 2. What is unclear at the moment is how to be sure that the approach chosen is the right one, as the context is not provided.

The links between indicators, outputs and outcomes are usually very tenuous. The way the document describes outputs is difficult to link them to the outcomes and some outcome statements are missing. There seems to be some confusion regarding notions of outcomes and outputs. This may be a matter of terminology only, though. Outcomes seem to be stated here as outputs. Many of the outcome indicators are measures of output (ex. number of, etc ...). We may want to ask UNAIDS to come with a fewer but well defined common outcomes and key outputs and performance indicators to support the monitoring and evaluation (**M&E**) of the programme. The plan also appears to be confusing Results-based Management (**RBM**) and evaluation. In fact, very little is said about an evaluation strategy or approach, contrary to what the document title suggests.

It seems that it will be difficult to disaggregate impact of actions between UNAIDS Cosponsors and governments. At best, the framework will probably give us good information about the overall state of the fight against HIV/AIDS but is not likely to help us understand how well UNAIDS and its Cosponsors are contributing to the effort.

This framework will be difficult to operationalize as it focuses heavily on the mechanics of the framework but hardly at all on how UNAIDS will actually integrate the resulting information into its ongoing planning, operations and decision-making. Similarly, there is no indication as to how the results will be used to ensure accountability: there will be no way of making specific managers, units or sometimes even Cosponsors specifically accountable for shortcomings or successes because most of the information is going to be collected at a very high level aggregated manner.

Finally, it would be interesting for the plan to include a mention of how the data will be collected and analysed and reported on given the challenge of having 10 organizations work on this.

## **II. Comments from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland**

*– Received by the UNAIDS Secretariat on 3 December 2007*

We welcome this for the 2008–2009 (UBW). It is a much more **robust results based framework** that has rationalised the number of outcome indicators, introduced key output indicators and has **strengthened lines of accountability** within the joint programme.

The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework is the basis for starting to assess value for money of UN efforts, and quantifying the debate about **'making the money work'** by seeing how much can be delivered in terms of outcomes with a given amount of resources. If achieved, this could set a good example to others. We look forward to receiving the **mid term report** and seeing how future funding decisions are influenced by performance.

We welcome the fact that the Unified Budget and Work plan and Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework cascade down from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) (as in Figure 1) and recommend using the **MDG indicators and targets** were appropriate to further simplify and clarify their approach. The MDG targets and indicators should be fully outlined indicating how this framework feeds into the MDG framework also mentioning the UNGASS and the Universal access core indicators.

Pleased that the Budget and Work plan and Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework are organised around outcomes to be achieved rather than by Cosponsor's remit - the emphasis must be to **achieve results** in the most effective and efficient way.

We found the lay out of the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework, with its 7 outcome targets and 33 output targets, admirably streamlined given the scale of UNAIDS work and the broad agenda. We would like to forge closer ties with the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) dept as we prepare our own framework to track progress and impact of the new DFID AIDS strategy, particularly on the tricky issue of attribution.

We look forward to seeing the **targets and baselines** being further defined and finalised.

How will the **broad activities** of the Cosponsors listed under the outputs be monitored and measured? How will UNAIDS be able to monitor whether a Cosponsor is making an adequate contribution to the output area?

We hope that these Key Output areas and indicators will cascade down into individual **staff work plans and performance frameworks** of the Secretariat and Cosponsors.

How will **Cosponsor's** own performance frameworks and monitoring mechanisms link into the? How will the Secretariat ensure that Cosponsors deliver the reporting required to populate this framework.

How will Cosponsors **absorptive capacity** be monitored so that resources not being absorbed can be reallocated within the Unified Budget and Workplan?

We would like to see **efficiency targets** in the Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework so that any savings made can be reinvested into programmes.

What are the **underlying assumptions** and risk of this framework? Has there / will there be any independent evaluation of this results framework approach?  
How will UNAIDS Secretariat ensure it has the capacity to activate and report against the framework. Country level **M&E capacity** is often very weak.

One of the performance indicators is on **resource mobilization**. It is understandable to include this, but the target of raising \$30 billion by 2009 to meet UA by 2010 is unrealistic, and damaging to the credibility of the performance framework (and UNAIDS, if they are really aiming for this outcome). We are aware of the political sensitivities around the costings, but there must be some middle ground; e.g. some mention of better using the available resources.

There was some mention of strengthening procurement and other functions which would benefit the **health system** as a whole, but we would like to see a more pronounced move towards using AIDS funding for systems strengthening. Given the kind of resource estimates on the table, demonstrating the use of AIDS money to improve wider health system problems might be valuable.

### III. Comments from the United States of America

#### – Received by the UNAIDS Secretariat on 2 November 2007

First, we applaud UNAIDS for their rapid response in developing such a complete and technically sound document so soon after the June PCB. With all of the reform of the Unified Budget and Workplan, monitoring and evaluation– the means to hold UNAIDS Secretariat, Cosponsors and others responsible for results – has been lacking up till now. We think this is a good step forward. With that said, we have some comments and questions.

How well does this framework integrate with what is happening in the One UN initiative at the country level? Here I'm specifically thinking of the points made in the paper on page 12 "individual monitoring and accountability of Cosponsors and the Secretariat." A lot of what they are talking about strikes me as things that are going on (or are supposed to be going on) at the country level through the One UN initiative. The global level should build on good points from that and not repeat mistakes (as I understand it, each pilot is implementing the One UN initiative slightly differently).

We think that reading through Annex II is a little complicated, especially for the lay person, if they want an overview. So, we recommend that UNAIDS develop a table at the front that lists only the initial information for each item.

The document takes the time to define some terms, but not others. For example, on page 5, bullet 4 key outputs are defined, but not principal outcomes. We suggest that everything needs to be defined.

On page 5 in bullet three, the document says "it is understood that the precise causal link between results or observed changes and individual interventions may not be feasible or even desirable at times." Actually though, they break out specifics according to agency in much of the text that follows and in the appendix. For consistency, it might be better to address this head on by stating that when UNAIDS can identify specific linkages, they will. This change would also get rid of some of the squishiness in the current draft and

get at the accountability by agency that we are looking for as a major emphasis of Unified Budget and Workplan reform/evolution.

Regarding the indicators selected for the principal outcomes, we would note that some of the indicators are only tentatively linked to outcomes. At times there is quite a stretch required to get from indicator to outcome and in those cases, UNAIDS should provide more explanation of how this is supposed to work. For example, looking at the example given on page 10 of the draft – Principal Outcome 4 discusses “Enhanced human resource and systems capacities...” then the indicator shown for this is “percentage of adults and children receiving ART therapy...”.

Even if we recognize the relationship here, there are so many variables involved that one can easily argue that the connection between the two is tenuous at best. One might say that the human and system components are in place, but with insufficient funds an appropriately correlated percent of people in treatment cannot be met. Consequently, the system looks great, but the indicator looks bad due to unrelated circumstances. More explanation around the assumptions for these indicators might be useful.

These are our main comments; along with our desire to see the next iteration of the document before it is placed in final (I guess we will have it for the PCB). The Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Framework itself needs to be flexible enough to be able to evolve over time, given the likelihood that stronger and more efficacious methods for measuring outcomes and impact are likely to surface from other ongoing activities – like the GFATM five-year impact evaluation.