CONTRIBUTION OF AFRICA GROUP TO DEVELOPMENT OF TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNAIDS

The primary goal of the Independent External Evaluation of UNAIDS is to strengthen UNAIDS Secretariat and the Programme Coordinating Board to ensure effective coordination of the war against HIV/AIDS globally.

The trends, impact and response of the HIV/AIDS pandemic calls for renewed action and sustained commitment. The World Health Organization reported that at the end of 2006, coverage of children in need of AIDS treatment was only 15%; around 28% of people in need of antiretroviral treatment were accessing these medicines; an estimated 11% of HIV-infected pregnant women in low- and middle-income countries were receiving antiretroviral for prevention of mother-to-child transmission of HIV. UNAIDS reported that for every one new patient started on antiretroviral treatment for HIV/AIDS, six people became newly infected with HIV.

HIV/AIDS constitutes a global emergency and poses one of the most formidable challenges to the development, progress and stability of our respective societies and the world at large. HIV/AIDS requires exceptional and comprehensive global response.

Recognizing that over 70% of the global HIV/AIDS burden is in sub-Saharan Africa, member states from Africa must participate effectively and efficiently in the fight against HIV/AIDS.

Objectives of the Independent Evaluation

In line with the decision of the 20th meeting of the UNAIDS PCB, "the independent evaluation should be carried out to:
• Reassess priorities,
• Determine how to build on achievements and
• understand how UNAIDS can play a more effective role in the future strengthening global coordination on HIV/AIDS

The 2007 substantive session of ECOSOC endorsed the PCB decision and called for a "critical, constructive, inclusive and transparent "evaluation. The evaluation is therefore to be comprehensive in scope reflecting the aspirations and concerns of the entire membership. The evaluation is expected to serve as an invaluable source of information for strengthening the UNAIDS.

THEMES OF THE INDEPENDENT EXTERNAL EVALUATION

In order to meet the requirements as laid down in the mandate, it is critical that the evaluation encompasses the following themes;

1.   Management and organization of UNAIDS Secretariat.

This will include an assessment of the planning, monitoring and evaluation of the financial and administrative systems within the UNAIDS Secretariat. This is to include aspects of the organization such as its structure, devolution of power , delegation of authority, presence of UNAIDS Secretariat especially in the heavily affected countries, oversight, culture , human resource issues including its skills base, gender mainstreaming, geographic representation of the various regions in the various echelons of the organization as well as representation of the affected people. It is in this context that the evaluation is expected to identify the organization's core competencies and weaknesses, challenges and recommend how the strengths could be consolidated and how the weaknesses can be overcome. Special focus is to be placed on those areas where UNAIDS Secretariat assumes a lead role.

Particular focus is also to be laid on organizational efforts to secure sustainable funding for the programme, this is critical given that the funding for UNAIDS is on a voluntary basis. The evaluation should assess to what extent the organization is putting efforts to secure sustainable funding given that 20- 25 billion USD is required by 2010 for the fight against HIV/AIDS globally.

2.   Technical Support to National AIDS response by UNAIDS   Secretariat and the Co-sponsors

The UNAIDS is mandated to provide policy guidance relating to strategies and policies to be adopted in the fight against the pandemic. Technical support areas are grouped around three thematic headings;

- Strategic planning, governance and financial management
- Scaling up interventions
- Monitoring and evaluation, strategic information, knowledge sharing and accountability

The evaluation is to assess the impact of the technical support rendered through examining first the needs and priorities of the affected countries, the quantity and quality of the technical support rendered, identification, selection, management and review of technical support delivered, transaction costs, accessibility of funding for technical assistance, coordination and harmonization of efforts by the various co-sponsors including synchronization of relevant financial and administrative procedures including the Unified Budget and Work plan. Taking into account work that has been done by he Global Task Team on Improving Aids Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors and the three ones principle, the evaluation should also focus on the coordination mechanisms such as the Joint UN County Teams at both the national regional levels and mechanisms put in place to unblock bottlenecks. An assessment of the technical support facilities and the other mechanisms put in place to enhance service delivery are to be carried out.

The evaluation should assess the entire division of labour between the co-sponsors, clarity of the roles of co-sponsors, specialization and clear differentiation of roles taking into account organizational core competencies and comparative advantages and issues to do with monitoring evaluation and collective accountability. To what extent UNAIDS co-sponsors are accountable to each other for managing provision of technical support.

Although national HIV programmes are receiving increasing amounts of international assistance to scale up their responses, national capacities to implement large-scale interventions remains low. The assessment should assess the co-sponsors efforts towards improving this situation and also recommend the way forward. Focus should also be laid on resources available and resource gaps and the extent to which these resources are fully utilized.

Attention is also to be devoted to the extent to which UNAIDS and its co-sponsors are playing an effective leadership role in global policy discussions on the technical support area, establishing global and regional support mechanisms for delivery of country -level support, identifying gaps in the provision of support at country level, advising country-level stakeholders and stimulating demand for the services they provide.

The prevailing situation with regard to technical support makes it very costly, disorganized, and supply driven and inappropriate with no accountability for poor performance. Moreover, there exists a lot of confusion which causes adverse effects on national governance systems and even responses. Hence, technical support is required to ensure both drafting and submission of costed national plans for achieving universal access which do not compromise quality, transparency and engagement of civil society.

The epicentre of the pandemic and most of the affected countries has a critical shortage of other resources including human resources for health, weak health systems. It is therefore important *to measure* the impact, relevance and effectiveness of UNAIDS capacity building activities in generating, sharing and applying knowledge. In essence the evaluation should assess the role of UNAIDS in as far as provision of technical support in these areas is concerned, with a view to examining the situation on the ground, challenges and recommending the way forward.

Questions regarding the most effective balance in the programmes vis a vis treatment, prevention and care should also be tackled with a view to assessing the situation the effectiveness of the current strategy and how it can be adapted.

Specific focus is to be placed on provision of technical support social factors and sectors of the population that disproportionately bear the burden of the epidemic e.g. feminization of the epidemic and the spread of the disease among the youth are also important. The evaluation should assess UNAIDS efforts in the context of other socio-economic factors such as poverty and illiteracy. The HIV pandemic has affected some regions more than others. This means that some region requires urgent and exceptional responses and effort if the devastating effects of the pandemic are to be mitigated. To what extent does UNAIDS allow for procedures to be adaptable to different national

situations.

It is vital for the assessment to examine the extent to which UNAIDS and its co-sponsors align their technical support to national strategies, systems and specific situations and to what extent recipient countries exercise leadership over the policies, strategies and plans.

3. Governance Issues

This will entail the assessment of the roles and effectiveness of the Programme Coordinating Board, Committee of co-sponsoring organizations, the non-governmental organizations as a constituency and the relationship between members and the UNAIDS Secretariat. This will also entail assessing the opportunities and strength of the current governance structure including the role of non state actors in the governance of UNAIDS including issues to do with representation of the various constituencies in the PCB with a view to coming up with the current situation, challenges and the way forward and also assessing whether the status quo fosters a sense of ownership within the membership.

Of critical importance is the assessment of the allocation of resources regarding the extent adequate funding is provided for the most affected? This entails assessing the UBW as a planning tool. It is also critical to assess the mechanisms for the mobilization of resources as well as come up with recommendations on how to ensure predictable and sustainable financing for the HIV/AIDS programme.

It is also important to look at how the PCB as a governing body monitors and follows-up on its decisions and even those of ECOSOC. To what extent do the current structures facilitate appropriate monitoring and follow-up of the implementation of its decisions, financial and strategies and to what extent UNAIDS is accountable to the membership.

Another area related to governance is the issue of ownership of both decisions and programmes by the membership. It is therefore important to assess the role of UNAIDS in fostering leadership and ownership the membership, especially those heavily affected by the pandemic.

The evaluation is also to assess the extent to which there is appropriate representation of the various regions and individual member states in the PCB and its bureau, especially in light of the fact that the regions and some sectors of the populations are disproportionately affected by the pandemic.

Prioritization of issues by the governing bodies. Is the PCB paying attention to the right issues, for instance, sustainable funding, harmonization, social factors including women bearing disproportionate burden of the disease, violence against women, poverty , education and the balance between prevention, treatment and care and aligning international funding with national HIV/AIDS plans and strategies.

4.   UNAIDS Role in the Multilateral System

The evaluation will assess the role of UNAIDS in the multilateral setting, in the context of the broader UN system, its capacity to forge alliances and partnerships with donor countries, non governmental organizations and people living with HIV. It is critical to assess whether to what extent it generates and takes advantage of synergies with its partners.

The UNAIDS advocacy role is also to be assessed with focus being placed on the extent to which it is able to engage private sector in the response to HIV in areas such as efforts aimed at reducing the price of drugs, diagnostics etc.

This is also to include partnership and relations with regional organizations and other international organizations given the fact that regional fora play an important role like other global players in coordination.

Key Evaluation Issues

Like any evaluation it is critical that the evaluation addresses certain fundamental issues which are the basis of the themes outlined above.

These include;

1. Key changes in the external environment such as the impact at country-level of the additional resources mobilised through international initiatives to fight HIV/AIDS - UNAIDS Secretariat and cosponsors; The Global fund to Fight AIDS, tuberculosis and Malaria; PEPFAR; UNITAID among others. What must be done to ensure coherence at country-level. Why agreed global pronouncements is rarely the norm in country-level actions - Paris declaration on AID effectiveness; G8 Gleneagles commitments; Abuja declarations by African Heads of State; HIV/AIDS related goals contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration of 2000; Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS adopted by the General Assembly at its twenty-sixth special session in 2001; The World Summit Outcome; Political Declaration on HIV/AIDS adopted by the high-level meeting of the General Assembly in 2006; Supportive HIV/AIDS Resolutions by PCB and allied organizations.
2. Priority actions to address the acute shortage of health workers in countries most affected by the AIDS Epidemic
3. Strategies to ensure rationale allocation of resources in the fight against HIV/AIDS to countries and communities most affected
4. Impact on health system
5. Strategies aimed at ensuring predictable and sustainable financing in the war against HIV/AIDS
6. What additional measures are needed to develop an effective HIV Vaccine? HIV Vaccine offers the best hope in ending the HIV/AIDS pandemic. In 1997, President Bill Clinton of the United States of America raised expectations of an HIV Vaccine by 2007. The reality in 2007 is that no candidate vaccine in the current pipeline can

prevent the establishment of HIV infection. The most likely outcome is an AIDS Vaccine with therapeutic effects capable of reducing the viral load.

7. UNAIDS comparative advantage and its relevance to the needs and priorities of members and the international community. Priority actions to strengthen the PCB and UNAIDS Secretariat. Functionality and clarity of the objectives, strategy, and implementation plans to meet those needs and priorities; efficiency and effectiveness of the processes followed; Institutional strengths and weaknesses including institutional culture and the inclusiveness of processes; Quality and quantity of outcomes resulting from the activities and outputs and also in relation to resources deployed; Impacts and their sustainability in terms of benefits to present and future generations.

8. Monitoring and evaluation and collective accountability

Submitted by Kenya on behalf of the Africa Group