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Global Task Team Oversight Reference Group Report

Additional documents for this item: *none*

Action required at this meeting: *none*

Cost implications for decisions: *none*

INTRODUCTION

1. The UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board adopted the recommendations by the *Global Task Team on improving AIDS Co-ordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors (GTT)* in 2005. On request of the 18th Programme Coordinating Board meeting, the report: “*An independent assessment of progress on the implementation of the global task team recommendations in support of national aids responses*”, prepared by the Health and Life Sciences Partnership (HLSP) was presented to the 20th PCB meeting in June 2007¹
2. The 20th Programme Coordinating Board meeting took the following decisions in follow-up to the *report of the Global Task Team Independent Assessment*:
 - 13.1 *Adopts the recommendations contained in the Report of the Global Task Team Independent Assessment (document UNAIDS/PCB(20)/07.9) and acknowledges their cost implications as outlined in the annex to the report;*
 - 13.2 *Requests the UNAIDS family to take forward its management response to the recommendations in 13.1; and*
 - 13.3 *Requests the Programme Coordinating Board Bureau to establish a reference group for oversight and² implementation of the recommendations in 13.1.*
3. The UNAIDS response and follow-up plan was finalized by the Committee of Cosponsor Organizations (CCO) in its meeting in October 2007. The plan included decisions on how the recommendations from the independent GTT review will be taken forward, under the oversight of the GTT Oversight Reference Group.
4. The Chair of the Oversight Reference Group reported to the 22nd Programme Coordinating Board meeting on progress in the implementation of the GTT Oversight Reference Group work plan. The Programme Coordinating Board made the following decision:
 - 13 *Takes note of the establishment and progress of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board Reference group on oversight of the implementation of the recommendations of the Global Task Team Independent Assessment in support of national AIDS Responses (“GTT Oversight Reference Group”), as presented by its chair and requests that the Group report back on progress to the 23rd Programme Coordinating Board meeting;*
5. The purpose of this document is to provide the information requested in the decision point and, in doing so, to inform the discussions of the Programme Coordinating Board around the GTT Oversight Reference Group's assessment of progress on implementing the GTT recommendations.

¹ Report of the independent assessment of progress on the implementation of the global task team recommendations in support of national aids responses, HLSP, Kathy Attawell and Clare Dickinson, 11 May 2007
http://data.unaids.org/pub/ExternalDocument/2007/hlsp_gtt_assessment_item4_3_en.pdf

FINDINGS

Empowering National Leadership

6. Progress is being made in improving the coordination of UN supplied Technical Support (TS), in establishing quality assurance mechanisms, and in enhancing the relevance of some TS mechanisms. However, attention needs to focus on whether these developments are changing anything at country level or overcoming recognised challenges. Challenges include limited country capacity to identify and articulate technical support needs and to develop comprehensive TS plans based on demand rather than supply

Reform for a more effective multilateral response

7. UNAIDS has called itself a pathfinder for UN reform and has provided critical experience and useful models for Delivering as One through its progress with the Three Ones, formulation of Joint Teams and Programmes, and the Division of Labour (DOL). It has also encouraged donor partners to support UN reform at country level through Joint Programmes that respect the DOL. More opportunities exist for documenting how and why GTT principles and action have inspired country progress in Delivering as One.
8. Significant progress has been made in establishing Joint Teams on AIDS at country level but slower progress has been made in developing Joint Programmes of Support - due in part to the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) processes and country planning cycles which provide entry points for Joint Programmes of support. Joint Teams appear to be promoting dialogue and coordination and enabling the UN to speak and act as "One" on AIDS issues in certain contexts but challenges remain.
9. The Division of Labour (DOL) is being widely implemented with several agencies completing their recruitment of additional staff, but a robust review mechanism is needed to ensure the DOL remains fit for purpose. This implies reviewing more than resource requirements for the DOL. It is also necessary to explore if and how working practices are changing and being streamlined as a result of the DOL.

Accountability and Oversight

10. Progress on improving accountability of cosponsors through the Secretariat or within UNAIDS in general, remains a key challenge. UNAIDS' ability to create change and move forward on GTT actions is dependent on the willingness and capacity of its cosponsors. Yet current governance systems such as the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) and Unified Budget and Workplan (UBW) remain incomplete in promoting mutual accountability and especially as they translate to action on the ground at country level.
11. Good progress has been made by some cosponsor agencies and Resident Coordinators in embedding staff participation in Joint Teams on AIDS in job descriptions and staff appraisals. This is a welcome and necessary step towards increasing staff accountability for their contribution on the Joint Team. On its own, however, it is unlikely to be sufficient for effective joint working.

Harmonisation and Alignment

12. The principles of the Three Ones have improved coordination by UN, donor and country partners by establishing and/or generating support to strengthen one strategic framework, one national AIDS authority and one national monitoring and evaluating framework, but country implementation still has a significant way to go.

13. There is a trajectory towards greater harmonisation and alignment of donors' actions in relation to the Three Ones and GTT processes, but on the whole high levels of commitment have not been matched by high levels of progress. Part of the problem is there does not appear to be an effective mechanism for holding the various actors, including bilateral donors, accountable for their implementation of GTT.
14. Progress has been made in involving external stakeholders in regular joint review processes of national AIDS strategies, most evident through the use of the Country Harmonisation and Alignment Tool (CHAT). The CHAT is proving to be a promising tool for accountability and may help increase dialogue around the obstacles and solutions to harmonisation and alignment of all partners involved in the national response.
15. Progress has been made in establishing an enhanced mechanism for the Programme Acceleration Fund (PAF), which is waiting final decision by the Secretariat. On the other hand, progress in aligning the UBW with the DOL is proving more difficult to assess.

RECOMMENDATIONS

16. To ensure that UNAIDS continues to prioritise and make progress towards the Three Ones and the implementation of the GTT recommendations, in support of national AIDS responses results towards Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and support, it is recommended that the PCB continues to report on GTT implementation, follow-up, and lessons learned for UN reform, for the proceeding year. However, we recommend that after reporting progress through the publication of this report, GTT oversight be reviewed and consideration be given to whether such oversight can be folded into other governance processes within UNAIDS rather than as a stand-alone reference group. We recommend the GTT ORG be considered concluded with the publication of this report and look to the PCB and the results of the second independent evaluation to guide further progress toward the recommendations we have laid out in this report.
17. The GTT ORG recommends that findings/synthesis of (i) Joint Reviews of National AIDS Strategies and CHAT reviews and (ii) Annual Reviews of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes are shared with PCB members during regular GTT reporting sessions in order to establish a monitoring progress. The Joint Reviews, including the CHAT, will permit global synthesis and analysis and should provide "bigger picture" evidence of harmonisation and alignment of AIDS responses, e.g. if donors are aligning their support in country X what has been the result on the national AIDS resource envelope? Annual Reviews should start providing the PCB with evidence beyond progress indicators on the process of joint working, demonstrating the added-value of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes and how they are contributing to national AIDS responses.
18. Annual Reviews of UN joint working are still in their infancy and are not yet consistently implemented everywhere. We recommend that further studies are conducted (as and when needed) to pin-point specific areas of progress that may not be covered in enough depth through Annual Review processes. For example, analyses of the workings and progress on implementing the division of labour at country level. Additionally we recommend that procedures are put in place by regional support teams and cosponsor agencies for monitoring and oversight of the recommendations of Annual Reviews and additional studies.

19. UNAIDS is commended for its efforts towards increased transparency and accountability through its development and implementation of the UBW Performance monitoring matrix. This tool should be strengthened to enable it to provide increased accountability of individual agencies within the larger UNAIDS programme, which the PCB has already considered an urgent priority. We therefore urge UNAIDS to expand on the work of the Performance matrix to strengthen the role that the tool can play as an accountability tool.

ANNEX 1

**GTT Oversight Reference Group Progress
Report to the 25th UNAIDS Programme
Coordinating Board
2009**

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ACRONYMS

AAA	The Accra Agenda for Action
ASAP	AIDS Strategy and Action Plan
CHAT	Country Harmonisation and Alignment Tool
CoATS	Coordinating AIDS Technical Support
DFID SA	Department for International Development, South Africa
DOL	Division of Labour
GIST	Global (Joint Problem Solving and) Implementation Support Team
GTT	Global Task Team
GTT ORG	Global Task Team Oversight & Reference Group
IHP+	International Health Partnership and related initiatives
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
NAC	National AIDS Committee/Commission
NSF	National Strategic Framework
PAF	Programme Acceleration Fund
PCB	Programme Coordinating Board
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (US)
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper
RC	Resident Coordinator
RST ESA	Regional Support Team East and Southern Africa
TS	Technical Support
TSF	Technical Support Facility
UBW	Unified Budget and Workplan
UCC	UNAIDS Country Coordinator
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UNTG	United Nations Theme Group

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background and Purpose of the Report

To improve global and national results in responding to HIV, including through better coordination and translating the Principles of the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness into the complex AIDS arena, UNAIDS has spearheaded two important initiatives: (i) the Three Ones Principles and (ii) the Global Task Team (GTT) on improving AIDS coordination among multilateral institutions and international donors. The original GTT report advanced the work of the Three Ones through its recommendations under four broad areas: empowering national leadership; harmonisation and alignment; reform for a more effective multilateral response; and accountability and oversight. UNAIDS has been implementing the recommendations since 2005 and progress was independently assessed in 2007. The 20th Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) endorsed the recommendations of the Independent Assessment and also agreed to the UNAIDS follow-up plan for implementing the recommendations of the Independent Assessment and the establishment of a GTT Oversight Reference Group to oversee progress and reporting requirements of stakeholders.

This report represents the GTT Oversight Reference Group's assessment of progress on implementing GTT recommendations and the Three Ones principles and has a particular focus on tracking progress in implementing the UNAIDS follow-up plan¹. Progress on the implementation of these commitments will address some of the most important blockages to reaching Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and support. Duplication, gaps, inefficiencies in implementation of national responses, exclusion of actors and affected populations from planning or implementation serve to undermine achievement of results related to resources available. In addition, the approaches piloted by the Joint Programme to improve genuine joint work among UN agencies in support of national AIDS responses provide important experience upon which to build current and future UN Reform efforts.

Methodology

The Reference Group's methodology involved a desk review of key documents and questionnaires and reporting formats to cosponsor and Member State agencies. The Reference Group took this decision due to time and budget constraints and an understanding that many of the processes and systems under review by it would be reviewed in detail by the second independent UNAIDS evaluation. It is hoped that the findings of this report will influence future GTT action as well as inform the second independent UNAIDS five year evaluation. Documentary sources that yield *new* insights into progress and challenges in implementing GTT, the Three Ones and the follow-up plan are limited. As a result, reporting substantive progress at the country level has been problematic and this report focuses on trends identified, and discusses challenges and opportunities for progress.

Progress and challenges

Empowering National Leadership

Progress is being made in improving the coordination of UN supplied Technical Support (TS), in establishing quality assurance mechanisms, and in enhancing the relevance of some TS mechanisms. However, attention needs to focus on whether these developments are changing anything at country level or overcoming recognised challenges. Challenges include limited country capacity to identify and articulate

technical support needs and to develop comprehensive TS plans based on demand rather than supply. Further work should focus on empowering country partners to make the right choices in TS through (i) supporting government-led TS planning processes and (ii) harmonising TS procurement processes like improving the user-friendliness of UN supplied TS. The Global Implementation Support Team (GIST) and AIDS Strategy & Action Plan service (ASAP) are important mechanisms in the sense that they provide venues to promote harmonization and focusing TS on country results as recognized by the 23rd PCB. Capacity development in the broader sense needs to receive more attention, looking at longer term TS and training programmes for national staff, also using national institutions that have the capacity to provide the required support.

Reform for a more effective multilateral response

UNAIDS has called itself a pathfinder for UN reform and has provided critical experience and useful models for Delivering as One through its progress with the Three Ones, formulation of Joint Teams and Programmes, and the Division of Labour (DOL). It has also encouraged donor partners to support UN reform at country level through Joint Programmes that respect the DOL. More opportunities exist for documenting how and why GTT principles and action have inspired country progress in Delivering as One. UNAIDS should also take advantage of independent analyses conducted by co-sponsors, such as the October 2008 external review of UNFPA's Country and Sub-Regional Support to National Responses to HIV/AIDS. UNFPA's review included analysis of its effectiveness in carrying out its agency-specific responsibilities and mandates and of its effectiveness as a part of the Joint Programme.

Significant progress has been made in establishing Joint Teams on AIDS at country level but slower progress has been made in developing Joint Programmes of Support - due in part to the UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) processes and country planning cycles which provide entry points for Joint Programmes of support. Joint Teams appear to be promoting dialogue and coordination and enabling the UN to speak and act as "One" on AIDS issues in certain contexts but challenges remain. Many agencies face operational constraints to joint work due to (i) poorly harmonised financial and administrative systems within the UN family, (ii) challenges deriving from organisational culture in conceptualising and making Joint Teams and Programmes work at country level, (iii) the need for Joint Teams and Programmes to assess the contribution of each partner in the overall joint work on universal access targets, or to look at how joint working has contributed to positive outcomes in each area, and (iv) review processes which need to include external stakeholders so the UN is not assessing its own progress. While process is important, Joint Teams need to always prioritize action that will result in more effective support or advocacy for national strategy implementation, and ensure that reform processes do not become an end in themselves.

The Division of Labour (DOL) is being widely implemented with several agencies completing their recruitment of additional staff, but a robust review mechanism is needed to ensure the DOL remains fit for purpose. This implies reviewing more than resource requirements for the DOL. It is also necessary to explore if and how working practices are changing and being streamlined as a result of the DOL. The Annual

Reviews of individual Joint Teams and Programmes will help get a picture of progress in this area but additional assessments may be required.

Accountability and Oversight

Progress on improving accountability of cosponsors through the Secretariat or within UNAIDS in general, remains a key challenge. UNAIDS' ability to create change and move forward on GTT actions is dependent on the willingness and capacity of its cosponsors. Yet current governance systems such as the Programme Coordinating Board (PCB) and Unified Budget and Workplan (UBW) remain incomplete in promoting mutual accountability and especially as they translate to action on the ground at country level. It is not always clear how the governance systems in UNAIDS (the PCB and the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO)) relate to one another and this can prove challenging for following up on GTT recommendation implementation as well as determining where the action is.

Good progress has been made by some cosponsor agencies and Resident Coordinators in embedding staff participation in Joint Teams on AIDS in job descriptions and staff appraisals. This is a welcome and necessary step towards increasing staff accountability for their contribution on the Joint Team. On its own, however, it is unlikely to be sufficient for effective joint working. Emphasis must also be placed on having a continuity of competent staff that are qualified and motivated to make the DOL work.

Harmonisation and Alignment

The principles of the Three Ones have improved coordination by UN, donor and country partners by establishing and/or generating support to strengthen one strategic framework, one national AIDS authority and one national monitoring and evaluating framework. Country implementation still has a significant way to go, requiring progress in three main areas: (i) making the national strategic frameworks "real" by costing and implementing them (ii) strengthening the capacity, role, relevance and clout of National AIDS Commissions and dealing with the need for better alignment of the work of the CCMs and the Commissions and (iii) continuous strengthening of national M&E systems – an issue highlighted by donors as a challenge to harmonisation and alignment, the Three Ones, and the national response.

There is a trajectory towards greater harmonisation and alignment of donors' actions in relation to the Three Ones and GTT processes, but on the whole high levels of commitment have not been matched by high levels of progress. Part of the problem is there does not appear to be an effective mechanism for holding the various actors, including bilateral donors, accountable for their implementation of GTT. In addition, there needs to be greater work in the Joint Programme in ensuring that harmonization and alignment activities in HIV/AIDS are themselves aligned with broader aid effectiveness and UN reform efforts that have grown up since the original GTT report.

Progress has been made in involving external stakeholders in regular joint review processes of national AIDS strategies, most evident through the use of the Country Harmonisation and Alignment Tool (CHAT). The CHAT is proving to be a promising tool for accountability and may help increase dialogue around the

obstacles and solutions to harmonisation and alignment of all partners involved in the national response.

Progress has been made in establishing an enhanced mechanism for the Programme Acceleration Fund (PAF), which is waiting final decision by the Secretariat. On the other hand, progress in aligning the UBW with the DOL is proving more difficult to assess. This is, in part, because the follow-up action plan has not gone far enough in strengthening the UBW as an accountability tool, both in terms of allocating resources to agency technical areas, as well as finding ways to hold cosponsors accountable for delivering on the results and outputs in the UBW performance monitoring matrix. While the matrix provides for more accountability of UNAIDS as a whole, the outputs in the UBW performance monitoring matrix are “shared” between cosponsors, making it difficult for any one agency to be held accountable for achieving outputs. UBW planning processes also need to reflect how the DOL is working in practice at country level.

Recommendations of the GTT Oversight Reference Group to the PCB

Recent developments such as the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA) and the International Health Partnership and related initiatives (IHP+) represent important opportunities to strengthen and make tangible country level progress against the principles of the Paris Declaration, GTT and the Three Ones. It is therefore critical that progress on the GTT recommendations remains a high priority, remains visible and continues to be reported to the UNAIDS PCB.

1. To ensure that UNAIDS continues to prioritise and make progress towards the Three Ones and the implementation of the GTT recommendations, in support of national AIDS responses towards Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and support, it is recommended that the PCB continues to review GTT implementation, follow-up, and lessons learned for UN reform, for the proceeding year. However, we recommend that after reporting progress at the 25th PCB (December 2009), GTT oversight be reviewed and consideration be given to whether such oversight can be folded into another governance process within UNAIDS rather than as a stand-alone reference group. We recommend that the PCB recognize the inherent limitations in GTT follow up through a stand-alone mechanism as evidenced by the weak ability of the GTT Reference Group to attract detailed and meaningful responses to its questionnaires, and urge that the PCB consider how to incorporate GTT follow up in its regular governing processes.

2. The GTT ORG recommends that findings/synthesis of (i) Joint Reviews of National AIDS

Strategies and CHAT reviews and (ii) Annual Reviews of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes are shared with PCB members during regular GTT reporting sessions. The Joint Reviews including the CHAT will permit global synthesis and analysis and should provide “bigger picture” evidence of harmonisation and alignment of AIDS responses, e.g. if donors are aligning their support in country X what has been the result on the national AIDS resource envelope? Annual Reviews should start providing the PCB with evidence beyond progress indicators on the process of joint working, demonstrating the added-value of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes and how they are contributing to national AIDS responses.

3. Annual Reviews are still in their infancy and are not yet consistently implemented everywhere. We recommend that further studies are conducted (as and when needed) to pin-point specific areas of progress that may not be covered in enough depth through Annual Review processes. For example, analyses of the workings and progress on implementing the DOL at country level. Additionally we recommend that procedures are put in place by regional support teams and cosponsor agencies for monitoring and oversight of the recommendations of Annual Reviews and additional studies.

4. UNAIDS is commended for its efforts towards increased transparency and accountability through its development and implementation of the UBW Performance monitoring matrix. This tool should be strengthened to enable it to provide increased accountability of individual agencies within the larger UNAIDS programme, which the PCB has already considered an urgent priority. We urge UNAIDS therefore to

expand on the work of the Performance matrix to strengthen the role that the tool can play as an accountability tool.

1. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

1.1 Background

The pace of change in the international AIDS arena has been significant and impressive in the last five to seven years with a number of new funding programmes providing unprecedented opportunities to scale up HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. However, the proliferation of different programming approaches, funding modalities and country level coordinating mechanisms that accompany these initiatives has called for urgent improvements in global and national AIDS coordination.

The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness represents international donor and country partner commitment to reforming the ways in which aid is delivered and managed. In the context of AIDS, widespread recognition of the need to use human and financial resources and coordinate partnerships more effectively encouraged UNAIDS to spearhead two important initiatives in aid effectiveness: (i) the endorsement in 2004 of the “Three Ones Principles” in which all actors committed to organising their AIDS activities through **one** agreed national AIDS strategic framework and **one** national monitoring and evaluation framework, through the auspices of **one** national coordinating agency, and (ii) the establishment of the Global Task Team on improving AIDS coordination among multilateral institutions and international donors (GTT)ⁱⁱ. The GTT report, published in 2005, was ground breaking in that it translated the principles of the Paris Declaration into commitments and specific actions for the first time, for one of the most fragmented “sectors”. In addition it built on and expanded the UNAIDS experience of piloting aspects of UN Reform toward more coherence at country level.

The GTT reportⁱⁱⁱ made a large number of recommendations in four broad areas:

- **Empowering national leadership and ownership** – mainly through a series of recommendations that aimed to strengthen national AIDS planning processes and embed these within broader development frameworks such as Poverty Reduction Strategy processes;
- **Harmonisation and Alignment** – UN and international development partners, particularly the World Bank and the Global Fund, to improve alignment of their support with national plans, country cycles and country systems;
- **Reform for a more effective multilateral response** – primarily through the establishment of Joint UN Teams and Joint Programmes on AIDS and an effective UN DOL for technical support, based on the comparative advantage of each agency;
- **Accountability and oversight** – through a number of recommendations that focus on country-led participatory reviews of the performance of development

partners and strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems and structures to facilitate oversight and problem solving.

In 2007, an Independent Assessment^{iv} of progress on the implementation of the GTT recommendations was undertaken, the recommendations of which were endorsed at the UNAIDS 20th PCB. The PCB also endorsed the UNAIDS response and follow-up plan and took the decision to establish the GTT ORG for oversight and implementation of the recommendations of the Independent Assessment and UNAIDS follow-up plan.

In September 2008, the development community met in Accra, Ghana, to review and hold itself accountable for progress on the Paris commitments on aid effectiveness. A key outcome of this meeting was the endorsement of the Accra Agenda for Action (AAA)^v which commits the development community to accelerating the implementation of the Paris Declaration in three areas: (i) ensuring developing countries take a stronger lead in their own development policies with donors supporting them through respecting country priorities, investing in human resources and institutions and making greater use of their systems to deliver aid (ii) building more effective and inclusive partnerships that include all development actors, including global funds, civil society and the private sector (iii) achieving development results and being accountable for them i.e. translating actions into positive impacts on people's lives and being accountable to each other, parliaments and respective governance bodies for these outcomes.

These issues, central to the aid effectiveness agenda have been highlighted in the High Level Meetings on AIDS as challenges to the global AIDS response with its complex aid environment, and specifically for countries in their efforts towards their Universal Access targets. The increased global funding and the focus on results on Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and support has reaffirmed the need for robust GTT and Three Ones processes at country level and emphasized the need for accelerated action. Some challenges include the co-ordination of potentially many more partners; the need to speed up reform processes and demonstrate the impact of these reforms on the epidemic; and the need to recognise country partners' greater influence on the organisation of technical support.

1.2 Objectives and methodology

This report represents the GTT ORG's assessment of progress on implementing the GTT recommendations and the Three Ones principles, and specifically tracks progress in implementing the UNAIDS follow-up plan to the Independent Assessment. It is hoped that the findings of this progress report will inform the future follow-up of GTT recommendations. The methodology involved a desk review, discussions amongst the reference group members and views from informants that have been used throughout this report. The desk review included documents resultant of the GTT commitments or related studies and documentation; some standard questions to the UNAIDS cosponsors and reporting formats to international donors including Global Fund (see annexes). Responses to the Group's request from donors and cosponsors were limited, which must be seen as a limitation of this report.

Since the group was set up shortly after the independent assessment of GTT progress which included six country studies, the choice was made not to gather country level information specifically for this report. The terms of reference for the second independent evaluation of the Joint UN Programme on AIDS includes a focus on GTT progress, which will allow for more information on country level results.

This report summarises the assessment findings, conclusions and recommendations. Section 2 discusses the findings of the assessment and structures these under the four original GTT headings. Section 3 discusses resources and Section 4 includes concluding remarks and recommendations to take forward the GTT recommendations. Annexes include:

Annex 1: Letter to cosponsor organisations, letter to donor partners, donor partner reporting format

Annex 2: Bibliography and list of documents used in the report

Annex 3: Progress indicators for Joint Teams on AIDS, results from Asia Pacific Region

Annex 4: Summary action chart of GTT ORG

2. KEY FINDINGS

2.1 Empowering National Leadership and Ownership

The Independent Assessment analysed the empowerment of national leadership and ownership through the theme of TS provision and argued that national ownership and leadership of the national response could only be enhanced if countries were able to identify technical support needs and knew where and how to obtain appropriate technical support. Recommendations and follow-up therefore concentrated on improving the relevance and accessibility of new and existing TS mechanisms to country partners.

Within the Joint UN Programme on AIDS a range of mechanisms for delivering technical support are available to countries. The Technical Support Facilities have been set up fairly recently by the UNAIDS secretariat and focus on strategic planning and civil society capacity building. Technical support is also provided by cosponsors, their technical partners and various technical networks, according to the relevant areas within the Division of Labour. These include Collaborating Centres, Knowledge Hubs and other technical and capacity building institutions and networks. Globally, Civil Society networks have increasingly developed their technical support capacity towards implementing countries' partner/member organisations. However, the Reference Group could not identify a sole repository for all technical support programs and services offered by the UNAIDS family and in this regard, we look forward to an update of the UNAIDS Technical Support Strategy called for at the twenty-third PCB in December 2008.

Progress

A pilot study to “intensify” TS experiences in six countries through joint needs assessments, using existing working groups, under national leadership has been undertaken. The process appears to have been useful in enhancing joint working arrangements by bringing together different groups of stakeholders. Of particular note is the benefit of using the UN to guide country partners on TS planning processes. The UNAIDS report entitled ‘Progress made on Intensification of Technical Support’

identifies some useful lessons for UN and country partners for empowering national ownership and leadership around TS issues:

- Adopting a participatory approach to intensify technical support, under the leadership of the national AIDS coordinating authority, is crucial for country ownership of the process;
- Making use of existing working groups involved in development of National Strategic and Action Plans proved to be an effective mechanism for TS planning;
- TS has to be aligned with national priorities and the national strategic planning process to ensure country ownership and relevance to the national response;
- Priority setting is an important element in the planning process and should be done in the selection of the most critical gaps and obstacles to be addressed and the most efficient and effective TS to be provided.

Progress has also been made in enhancing the relevance of some TS mechanisms, in particular the Global Implementation Support team (GIST) which has been previously criticized for its lack of clear mandate and role in providing solutions, particularly when other mechanisms existed at the country level e.g. the UN Theme Groups on AIDS or the Joint UN Teams on AIDS. As part of the UNAIDS follow-up plan, a comprehensive review of the GIST Terms of Reference has taken place and a reconstituted GIST **now called the Coordinating AIDS Technical Support (CoATS) team** exists with a results-based work plan through to the end of 2008 and a 2009 plan in place as well.

As part of its re-vamped Terms of Reference, CoATS is striving to operate as a cohesive and collaborative group of agencies that harmonises and coordinates TS. It has developed a set of principles for TS for providers and users and has recently created the CoATS database – a web-space which responds to the need to support country level coordination of TS. The CoATS database is a tool that users can search and access information about type, duration and nature of technical support being provided in-country. The tool is available for everybody, but only users with data entry rights can input data. Today regional and global TS providers are entering data in CoATS. In parallel the CoATS database is being piloted at country level. Five of the pilot countries, Bangladesh, Cambodia, Tanzania, Kenya and Guyana, are, in close collaboration with the National AIDS Commissions (NACs), recruiting country level focal points that will manage data entry, liaise with partners and work in close conjugation with other TS coordination initiatives. The next step is to respond to feedback and lessons learned from the pilot.

While these globally developed tools can be useful to improve country level coordination, starting with an overview of technical support, most importantly a shift needs to be made from continuous ad hoc short term technical support requests and

provision to a more sustainable, development approach of capacity development. Habits at all levels need to be challenged: from country level identification of capacity development, including long term technical support needs; to international partners that should look beyond their 'mandate' and usual way of working with international consultants to capacity development of institutions with training schemes and multi-year involvement that should prioritize use of national institutions and capacity. Civil Society approaches to capacity development may provide useful experiences in this sense, and need to be more integrated in the national overview.

Progress on the development of feedback mechanisms for national partners on TS has been difficult to assess. The notoriously difficult aspect of quality assurance and feedback needs more elaboration of routine mechanisms to be meaningful; and capacity development of those requesting technical support as well as the intermediaries to be able to objectively assess the quality of the technical support requests as well as the responses. The UNAIDS follow-up plan has interpreted "feedback mechanisms" differently to the original analysis of the Independent Assessment, with feedback now being provided mainly by UN suppliers of TS through Annual Reviews of the Joint Programme – a somewhat different notion to ensuring feedback mechanisms are available and in place for country partners to use, and that feedback informs and improves the quality of services broadly. Similarly, Technical Support Facilities have put feedback mechanisms in place to improve the quality of their consultants, but results are not yet sufficient to inform understanding. The UNAIDS Strategy & Action Plan services (ASAP), produces progress reports on a quarterly basis which are disseminated among partners as well as posted on the ASAP website. The WHO Network for HIV and Health in Western Pacific Region was established in late 2008, bringing together over 20 technical support providers, to coordinate the provision of technical assistance related to the health sector response to HIV in the Western Pacific. Other regional networks are planned. Other cosponsor and civil society technical support provision falls under quality assurance mechanisms of each institution, including some feedback mechanisms. However, a national overview and assessment of the quality of technical support provision in the country, related to established national priority needs, is not available, and elements of such assessment are not routinely feeding into quality assurance mechanisms.

Remaining Challenges

Technical support provision will almost certainly be a major feature of the second independent evaluation of UNAIDS and the GTT Reference Group offers some of its observations as a way to inform this conversation. Despite the establishment of TS support mechanisms to support the implementation of national responses, many factors hinder access and take up of services by country partners:

- Limited country capacity to identify and articulate TS needs and to develop comprehensive TS plans based on demand, rather than supply;
- Inadequate assistance from multilateral and bilateral agencies to strengthen country capacity to develop comprehensive TS plans;
- Lack of informed demand from government partners for TS. This is attributed to low awareness of available TS mechanisms, reluctance to spend funds on

TS which has previously been “free”, and lack of capacity to procure and manage TS;

- Lack of systems to engage national partners in the process of sourcing TS and in providing feedback on the quality and relevance of TS provided by UN agencies and TS mechanisms.

Potential areas for further progress

- Though useful in enhancing joint work under country leadership, the intensified TS pilot does not appear to be informing approaches and tools for a “coherent and harmonised national system that national partners and stakeholders can use to access technical support through UN agencies and TS mechanisms” – a recommendation that was supposed to address widespread concerns of country and development partners about the UN as a provider of TS. Piloting streamlined approaches to procuring UN supplied TS remains a high priority for UNAIDS.
- The intensified TS pilot highlighted the benefit of guiding country partners through TS planning processes. Given the scarcity of budgeted and prioritised TS plans that accompany national AIDS strategies this represents a potential area for further progress. Using Joint Teams and Joint Programmes on AIDS to help national bodies develop plans showing requirements for TS to which partners can then respond can help reduce the focus on short term assistance and can provide the basis around which international partners can harmonise and align future support.
- Technical Support Facilities (TSFs) have come in to being since the GTT report and provide mainly short term TS to National AIDS Commissions. Although set up to help with “capacity development for country partners”, all TSFs have struggled with this problem, citing the ad-hoc nature of TS, the fix-it-with-a-consultant culture and the tension between short term and long term solutions as obstacles to focusing on longer term capacity development of country partners. Potential progress could be made in developing this area of work TSFs were more closely linked with the various technical support mechanisms of UNAIDS cosponsors. Furthermore, contractual obligations to UNAIDS (e.g. the numbers of TS days commissioned) should be reviewed in ways that would free up time to focus on the strategic environment of TS.

- The technical support mechanisms and structures of cosponsors need strengthening to ensure that they can deliver in those technical areas for which they are responsible under the DOL. Consideration should be given to developing linkages between the different technical support mechanisms of the cosponsors where appropriate.
- The 23rd PCB requested that UNAIDS update its technical support and capacity development strategy through an inclusive process involving implementing countries and civil society taking into account the need for more ownership of technical support at national level, more coordination of global provision and longer term sustainable strategies.^{vi} This strategy revision should look at needs for strengthening quality assurance processes and feedback mechanisms, including all the different mechanisms available to countries.

2.2 Reform for a More Effective Multilateral Response

Joint Teams and Joint Programmes on AIDS are designed to improve the harmonisation and alignment of UN responses to AIDS through enabling the UN to speak and act as “one team”, reinforcing alignment with national planning cycles and improving support to the national response through increased efficiency and effectiveness. Recommendations of the Independent Assessment and actions in the UNAIDS follow-up plan have focused heavily on resolving outstanding DOL issues, improving communications on UN reforms beyond the UN family, and on establishing quality assurance and accountability mechanisms for improving the effectiveness of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes and their outputs/outcomes.

Progress

Significant progress has been made with the establishment of Joint Teams on AIDS at country level, with 89 in place by the end of 2007. Slower progress has been made in the development of Joint Programmes, in part due to UN Development Assistance Frameworks (UNDAF) reviews and country planning cycles which provide the entry points for the Joint Programmes of support. Joint Teams are promoting dialogue and coordination and are enabling the UN to speak and act as “One” on AIDS issues e.g. in Ukraine on the issue of substitution therapy and in many countries including Burkina Faso, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Botswana, South Africa, Haiti, Cambodia, Ukraine, Georgia and Panama on support to the Global Fund proposal development process. Joint Teams appear to be an excellent example of the added-value of Delivering as One, and the UNAIDS model and experience of Joint Teams has made an important contribution to wider UN reform efforts, both in UN reform pilot countries and beyond.

“There is also evidence of the use of Joint Teams on AIDS experience in the UN reform pilot countries. This underscores the lessons to be learnt from the GTT implementation for the UN reform effort. A recent report on

Mozambique's progress in working as "one UN" specifically mentions that: "all UNDAF pillars will use the experiences of the UN team on AIDS to strengthen their coordination mechanisms within the UNDAF pillars"

"The experience and model of the UN Joint Team on HIV has served to facilitate the establishment of joint management and programming processes as part of the UN reform initiative in Vietnam—particularly newly established inter agency Programme Coordination Groups for other priority thematic areas" (UNAIDS Informant).

* Source: UNAIDS 2008d

It is the understanding of the GTT ORG that studies are underway to track GTT progress in UN reform countries. These studies will report on the contribution of GTT processes to ongoing UN reform and should inform us of how GTT priorities "fit" with ongoing UN reform processes.

Reports from East and Southern Africa, West and Central Africa and the Asia Pacific regions document progress and experience of establishing Joint Teams and Programmes from these regions. Although not representative of experiences everywhere, the East and Southern Africa report identifies five successful Joint Programmes which share the following characteristics:

- They are *evidence-informed*: the latest data and analysis about the epidemic have been used to set priorities needed to achieve the goals of the national strategic framework and operational plans;
- They are *comprehensive*: and bring together all UN resources and activities in AIDS and combine them within a cohesive framework to operationalize the UNDAF;
- They have determined the UN's *appropriate role*: they concentrate on the normative, up-stream work, along with the convening, coordinating and facilitating role, for which the UN is best placed;
- They determine the UN's *comparative advantage*: they have mapped existing partners and resources and determined how the UN can make the most effective contribution.
- They achieve a robust, coherent and cohesive strategic focus, using *results-based management*: they are based on a clear strategic results framework, with careful analysis of the results chain that will contribute to UNDAF Outcomes

Progress is being made in developing a quality assurance role for monitoring outputs from the Joint Teams and Joint Programmes and institutionalising Annual Reviews – the main instrument in the UNAIDS follow-up plan for assessing the progress and impact of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes in support of national AIDS responses. UNAIDS is developing a Performance Assessment Tool which measures the inputs and outputs of the Joint Teams and Joint Programmes using an adaptation of the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, relevance, coherence, effectiveness

and efficiency. The draft tool addresses three categories of assessment which are the Joint Teams, the Joint Programmes and their contribution to the national response. It is important that the tool additionally addresses the impact of joint working on the national response and that UNAIDS Secretariat consider ways to more effectively engage cosponsors in the roll-out and use of the Performance Assessment Tool.

The second set of comprehensive guidance notes produced and issued by UNAIDS in March 2008 has helped clarify issues of accountability and explain how to develop Joint Teams and a Joint Programme, and includes quality assurance checklists and tools to assess the use of UN resources on AIDS at country level. A few countries e.g. China, Myanmar, Thailand and India have developed Joint Programmes that reflect the use of the guidelines. Papua New Guinea used the guidelines to identify gaps in the National Strategic Plan and used it as an entry point for its joint programming and joint activities.

Progress in assessing resources required by Joint Teams to meet their Division of Labour responsibilities has been difficult to ascertain because information available for this progress review relates mainly to global capacity assessments of the resources required by cosponsor informants in order to meet DOL commitments. For example, UNESCO reported the near completion of recruitment of four Regional AIDS Advisors in Bangkok, Johannesburg, Moscow and Santiago. ILO, on the other hand, emphasizes the use and commitment of its existing human resources, with ILO staff participating in Joint UN Teams irrespective of whether it has an in-country presence. We understand that in many cases, capacity assessment at country level has been undertaken as part of the processes of adapting the DOL to country contexts. In Zambia, for example the process of domesticating the DOL resulted in some UN agencies reviewing and increasing their staffing (UNFPA, ILO and UNICEF) (HLSP 2007).

There is progress in strengthening in-country communications of Joint Teams to external partners through the development of a communications strategy that focuses on effective internal communication within the joint team, the wider UN, and with external stakeholders. It is too early to determine how well these guidelines will be used and to what effect. Some countries have started using the guidelines to develop their country specific communication strategies. The GTT ORG recognises that while there is a place for clarifications of roles and responsibilities of stakeholders outside of the UN, there is also a risk that these appear on paper only and that the paperwork comes with too high an opportunity cost.

Remaining Challenges

- Challenges remain in making operational, within country realities, the broad directives and guidance from undg or UNAIDS for Joint Teams and Joint Programmes. Many of these challenges are structural issues requiring long lasting changes within and between UN systems. Common operational challenges cited in the e-discussion and regional reports include:
 - Changing mindsets, and established ways of working takes time and cannot automatically be assumed by establishing a joint team;

- Transitioning to a true joint programme, beyond a compilation of agency activities is made more difficult by uneven commitment and priorities of UN agencies, competing interests, demands and high workloads within agencies;
 - Ensuring that funding, whether as pass through, pooled or parallel, flows smoothly and quickly and support of joint implementation;
 - Ensuring that reports, both progress and technical, are prepared and collated into a common format from various agencies' own systems;
 - Capacity building for Joint Team members as the demands of Joint Programmes identify weaknesses/gaps in capability and capacity within agencies, and in response to agency staff turn-over/instability of staff contracts;
 - Negotiating adaptations in individual agencies' focus, priorities, projects, to bring them in line with the Joint Programme's strategic focus;
 - Managing the various planning, review, programming and design cycles of individual agencies to bring them within the Joint Programme framework;
- Cultural challenges remain in conceptualising and making Joint Teams and Programmes work at the country level. Strong Resident Coordinator and Theme Group Chair leadership, vision and experience are essential for helping teams understand the value-added of Delivering as One. Internal advocacy, support, communication and guidance from cosponsor headquarters to their staff involved in Joint Teams is considered equally important.
 - Continued lack of understanding of the GTT recommendations at country level by some UN offices impedes progress.
 - Evaluation formats in the second set of guidance notes tend to focus on quantitative indicators that measure progress and quality of UN joint arrangements. This is a useful starting point but as Joint Programmes mature, indicators will need to focus more on the impact and sustainability of joint working on national AIDS responses – are Joint Teams and Programmes

making a difference and if so, how? And how are monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems of Joint Programmes fitting in with national M&E systems? Are organizational priorities such as gender and local capacity-building also priorities at country-level and are best-practices being followed to increase the likelihood of success? The Performance Assessment Tool is work in progress and recognises many of these points. The key now is for countries to use the tool and feedback regularly so teams can learn from and find ways to improve the performance framework.

- A challenge remains in ensuring the DOL stays relevant and is reviewed as '*remaining fit for purpose*'. This implies more than assessing resources required by agencies to fulfil their DOL obligations, but is concerned with demonstrating concrete evidence that the DOL is bringing about changes in working practices, including tackling duplication of efforts and increased rationalisation. The draft Performance Assessment Tool provides guidance on how to measure adherence to the DOL but more in depth analysis of the workings of the DOL at country level may be warranted.

Potential areas for further progress

- A key area for further progress is strengthening the Joint Team and Joint Programme Annual Review process to make it more meaningful. The Annual Review process should not be another case of the UN evaluating itself. This will also help raise awareness of Joint Programme efforts, achievements and opportunities with country, donor and civil society partners. Regional Directors Teams could then provide oversight of the recommendations from the Annual Reviews.
- There is still considerable progress to be made in determining whether the DOL remains fit for purpose. This is likely to require a different or additional review process to that proposed in the Annual Review. More convincing would be an attempt by individual agencies to live up to agreed DOL, notably by self-evident efforts at the organisational and individual level and for both of these, over time.

- More progress is needed in overcoming operational issues that constrain joint working e.g. test arrangements that enable Joint Teams to be given resources directly, to see if this encourages joint actions.
- There needs to be greater coordination between the Secretariat and Cosponsors to ensure the appropriate composition and staffing of Joint Teams.

2.3 Accountability and oversight

The recommendations under the original GTT heading of accountability and oversight refer primarily to strengthening country monitoring and evaluation systems and developing a scorecard accountability tool by the UNAIDS Secretariat with the World Bank. In the UNAIDS follow-up plan, actions for accountability and oversight feature heavily - focussing more on holding cosponsors accountable for their part in implementing the GTT recommendations, improving lines of accountability at country level, and improving external accountability of the Joint Teams and Joint Programmes to governments or other partners.

Progress on improving accountability within UNAIDS, e.g. of cosponsors through the UNAIDS Secretariat, remains a key challenge as the Secretariat lacks authority over its cosponsors and has difficulty in holding them accountable for their contributions to Joint Teams and Joint Programmes. Accountability mechanisms also include the Committee of Cosponsoring Organisations (CCO) and the cosponsor boards, where organisational reporting and coherence between boards could be improved. Opinions on empowering the Secretariat are divided: Is a realistic or desirable proposition in the context of UN reform to enhance the authority of the Secretariat so it can coordinate its cosponsors more effectively? Accountability can also be confused due to the multiplicity of governing structures within UNAIDS and the sometimes lack of clarity in how they relate to one another; e.g. the relationship between the PCB and the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO) and what issue gets taken to what forum. The second evaluation of UNAIDS will be examining governance structures and this may help shed light and progress on this recommendation in the future.

Progress has been made by cosponsor agencies and Resident Coordinators at country level in applying the guidance, process and inclusion of appropriate text in job descriptions and performance appraisals. UNAIDS' Joint Teams and Joint Programmes Summary of March 2008 states that participation in Joint Teams is embedded in job descriptions in 37 (41%) countries though progress reviews from the Asia Pacific Region suggest that progress is more mixed with only four out of 13 countries responding as having their terms of reference amended to reflect participation in the Joint Team.

A related factor often overlooked is the fact that some agencies have a stronger HIV/AIDS profile – both in numbers, in staff competence, in field experience and in resources – than others. Also, a large part of the staff involvement is part-time; it is only the smaller organisations that can answer unequivocally that *all* job descriptions of *all* relevant staff have been adapted, e.g. UNODC reported to the GTT ORG that in

support of the Joint Teams at country level, all 65 HIV staff members in 52 countries have Joint Team responsibilities in their job description and performance appraisal.

Whilst progress has clearly been made with this follow-up action, it is important that it is recognised for what it is - a first step to improving staff accountability for their contribution to joint working - and that participation in Joint Teams and Joint Programmes is necessary but not sufficient for the UN to perform effectively as One.

Some progress has been made on understanding incentives and their role in explaining what drives or hinders joint working and harmonisation and alignment. A report entitled ‘Incentives for aid effectiveness, with reference to donors in the domain of HIV/AIDS’ focuses mainly on donor incentives for harmonisation and alignment but includes a case study of incentives in establishing Joint Teams and Programmes on AIDS. The report recognised that work on incentives is under-analysed yet appears to be important and recommends further case study work is undertaken, possibly in the UN pilot countries, to explore for example, indicators that would capture success for the Joint Teams.

Remaining Challenges

- All the available tools and guidance for greater accountability are in place. The real challenge is to ensure that staff at all levels commit to using them and make them work in practice.

Potential areas for progress

- There needs to be much more emphasis both on internal change processes and *connecting UNAIDS action to external results*, and on more effective external communication of results. The GTT ORG observes that in the various guidelines there is virtually no specification of undesirable practices *within* the UN organisations which ought to be abandoned. Thus no connection is made between external practices that could be improved – ‘speaking with one voice’ - and internal practices that should *therefore* stop. This seems a path to explore in future guidelines and with Joint Teams.
- Further attention could be paid to understanding the incentives that help or hinder “joined-up working” and harmonisation and alignment both at an institutional and individual level (e.g. performance management, professional development, performance related sanctions and rewards, stage of career etc). Analysis should continue to focus on international partners (in relation to their commitments to the Paris Declaration and Accra Agenda for Action) and the UN system in order to

assess whether current accountability and governance systems to progress the implementation of GTT recommendations are adequate or need to be changed and enhanced.

- Rather than stand-alone processes such as the GTT Oversight Reference Group, those interested in follow up and accountability to GTT commitments need to assess current governance and reporting mechanisms and assign them the appropriate follow up tasks. This will have the effect of harmonizing GTT follow up and giving it higher priority as it is mainstreamed into established processes. We urge that the second independent evaluation and the UN System's response consider this challenge in formulating specific actions to be taken following the findings publication.

2.4 Alignment and Harmonization

Under the heading of Alignment and Harmonisation, the GTT report recommends actions targeting the Global Fund and the World Bank while calling upon international partners to implement similar actions. The Independent Assessment^{vii} however, was tasked with assessing a broader harmonisation and alignment agenda focussing on (i) harmonisation and alignment of programming, reporting and financing in multi- and bilateral institutions (ii) Global Fund and World Bank efforts to improve alignment in countries where they have projects (iii) international partners' progress towards greater harmonisation and alignment at country level, and (iv) greater coherence between headquarters' policies and commitments and country level actions, for all partners. The UNAIDS follow-up plan prioritises donor reporting to the PCB on progress in GTT and harmonisation and alignment, policy coherence of member states on UN boards, and the use of the Country Harmonisation and Alignment Tool (CHAT) for joint review processes of the national AIDS strategies.

Progress

Development partner reporting to the Reference Group on their actions to support implementation of the GTT recommendations including broader progress in harmonisation and alignment around HIV/AIDS, has been limited.

At the time of writing, eleven donors had responded to GTT ORG requests for reports (see Annex 1 for reporting format) and of those, only two reported on internal agency changes to sustain harmonised actions at the country level. Some insightful reports were provided using case studies to demonstrate actions. But on the whole, most of the reports dwell on successes and more candid reports documenting problems and how these have been overcome have been less forthcoming. As such, the reports offer limited opportunity for learning. Reporting in preparation of the Accra High Level Forum on Aid Effectiveness has shown that while this process has elicited fairly complete reporting by donors, the content of these reports was limited as for those

discussed here. In comparison, joint and multi-stakeholder reporting from countries under national ownership through monitoring on Paris commitments gave more objective information and brought new insights and better understanding.

The available donor reports suggest that although progress is slow, there is a trajectory towards greater alignment and harmonisation. Observations include:

- An important focus on national and local capacity development of government as well as other national organisations for a sustainable response and improved national coordination (US, Norway).
- Greater evidence of untagged support to pooled funding and sector wide arrangements that support the Three Ones, i.e. are aligned with one national AIDS strategy and support one national AIDS commission and one national monitoring and evaluation framework; the DFID contribution of £95m pooled fund contribution with the World Bank to the Indian National AIDS Control Programme, including an additional £7m technical support fund for the National and State AIDS Control Organisations.
- Evidence of “pooled” partners using their positions to support other donors and actors to use country systems and improve coordination. For example, in its report to the GTT ORG, New Zealand AID states that it uses its position on governance table of Papua’s Health Sector Improvement Plan to encourage other donors to harmonise their assistance through existing mechanisms; DFID supported monitoring and evaluations systems in Kenya now involve development partners previously “outside” the harmonisation and alignment agenda (see Box 2).
- More evidence of alignment of donor funding timeframes with national government planning cycles. For example, in Papua New Guinea, development partners meet early on in the planning process to discuss areas of support for the national AIDS strategy and commit resources for the following year. This assists the Government with developing the resource envelope and budget. The Global Fund has also recently aligned with this planning and budget cycle.
- Closer working arrangements with UN agencies at global, regional and country levels and evidence that some donors are increasing funding for GTT processes.

Box 2: Monitoring and Evaluation of the Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan*

DFID Kenya’s support to the Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan (KNASP) is

monitored by a log frame based on the KNASP M&E framework and includes individual UN and AMREF indicators. Process outputs include performance of the NAC, effective multisectoral programming, improved capacity of Civil Society Organisations, and harmonised and aligned funding arrangements. National AIDS Commission's (NAC) plan (WB/DFID-funded), UN's plan (DFID and other sources), and AMREF's plan will be peer reviewed. A committee will oversee this process and also ensure coordination with Global Fund and PEPFAR plans. NAC will summarise them in a NAC annual plan, capturing >98% of AIDS funding for Kenya. This process will promote national leadership, coordination, alignment and harmonisation.

* Source: Response of DFID to GTT ORG reporting format

Due to the lack of information from cosponsors, an assessment of progress on the coherence of member states on various UN boards has not been possible. This is in part because the reports received from cosponsors on Board discussions tend to focus more on how the *UN system* is responding to GTT rather than member states. Also, as board meetings are not public meetings, transcripts or statements are not freely available for analysis, making it impossible to assess actual inputs at board meetings beyond the brief, general public reports. The opinion of the GTT ORG is that while this is a laudable goal, it is not practical to pursue it directly through regular UNAIDS governance or monitoring processes. Member States themselves must be responsible for taking this recommendation forward as a matter of priority.

The application of the Country Harmonisation and Alignment Tool (CHAT) has enabled the involvement of external stakeholders in annual review processes of national AIDS strategies. CHAT has been used by some countries both in their joint government-donor annual review processes (e.g. in Zambia, Kenya) and for assessing the implementation of the Three Ones (e.g. in a number of countries in the West and Central African region). The tool is proving flexible in assessing the key areas of the OECD/DAC Aid Effectiveness pyramid and partner engagement in national responses. The critical step for countries is to move from the analysis and reporting stage to finding ways to address difficult partner behaviour and to improve the weaknesses in partnerships around the national response.

Continuing Challenges

- Slow progress in moving donors from high level commitment to harmonisation and alignment to action, and reporting on those actions and a lack of prioritization of reporting on harmonization and alignment activities in many programs current reporting systems.
- In the donor reports reviewed, use of one monitoring and evaluation system has challenged the capacity for adequate and timely reporting to development partners – getting good information on how funds are being spent and with what impact remains a significant obstacle to progressing the third “one” and the national response.

- Putting in place sound governance arrangements for internationally funded pooled mechanisms that attract donors but also ensure country partners to drive the agenda forward remains a considerable challenge in a number of contexts e.g. in the case of the Partnership Fund for HIV/AIDS in Indonesia. More efforts need to be made to exchange country experience and provide guidance to move forward on pooling international resources in support of a national plan.
- Donors in certain contexts appear to be trying to support GTT processes and the Three Ones more actively but in doing so are encountering operational problems within their own organizations. The harmonization agenda is often driven by programme officers, while funding procedures are usually managed by operational officers. Within the UN system there is still poor harmonisation or delegation of different agency financial management systems - funds for UNESCO and UNODC still need to transit through organisational headquarters. These constraints are being addressed on a case by case basis but overcoming these obstacles takes time and may detract from genuine joint working. Inter-agency fund transfers are such a problem with the Joint Support Plan in India that agencies are implementing programmes together but keeping fund transfer to a minimum.

Potential for Progress

While concurring on the whole with the analysis for recommending donor reporting on GTT progress, the GTT ORG has reservations about the feasibility of this action in its current form. Donor reporting at global level appears to have heavy transaction costs unless UNAIDS takes responsibility for extracting the data and information from donor reports produced for other purposes. Alternatively reporting could take place at country level – this could be explored through donor reporting to OECD/DAC country monitoring of the Paris Declaration, adding reporting on AIDS activities as an expansion of the focus of the traditional Paris monitoring on budget support and general aid. Further thought on how this action can be pursued in ways that draw on actors that have not participated, is also needed and could include external reviews of bilateral and international NGOs behaviour in the coordination of national AIDS responses.

UNAIDS should continue and increase the exchange of experience on harmonisation and alignment with organisations beyond the UN and beyond the AIDS arena, including the OECD/DAC and other sectoral organisations and partnerships. In addition to improving coherence amongst UN boards, the GTT Oversight Reference Group suggests that PCB members look for ways of linking discussions on harmonization and alignment within the AIDS “sector” to those discussions going on in broader development.

3. RESOURCES

This section refers to progress against recommendations focused on aligning or enhancing existing UN funding mechanisms: the UNAIDS Unified Budget and Workplan (UBW) and the Programme Acceleration Fund (PAF), and resource assessment needs for implementing the GTT and guidance on fund raising for Joint Programmes on AIDS.

Progress

An enhanced mechanism for channelling funds to country level has been developed. The UNAIDS Secretariat is using the PAF procedure to channel funds to countries, including for extra-budgetary funding, if and when country targeted funding has been specifically made available.

Progress in aligning future UBWs with the Division of Labour is proving difficult to assess because the UNAIDS follow-up plan does not go far enough in addressing the recommendation from the Independent Assessment which called for “the UNAIDS Secretariat and Committee of Cosponsoring Organisations to ensure that future UBWs are fully aligned with the technical support DOL and resources adequately support the levels and areas where agencies are responsible as Lead Organisations or Main Partners in the division of labour. UBWs should be used as an accountability tool across cosponsors by linking resources more closely to UNAIDS required results”. The UBW Performance Measurement Framework is expected to provide the information for accountability at least for UNAIDS as a whole and to a lesser degree for each cosponsor and the secretariat, results of this process should be followed closely.

Challenges and potential areas of progress

Enabling the UBW to become an accountability tool involves allocating resources to agency technical areas but also finding ways to hold cosponsors accountable for delivering on the results and outputs in the UBW performance monitoring matrix. At the moment this is not happening and part of the problem is that outputs in the UBW performance monitoring matrix are “shared” between cosponsors, making it difficult for any one agency to be held accountable for achieving outputs. UBW planning processes also need to reflect how the DOL is working in practice at country level. Technical agencies need to demonstrate competence and capacity in their technical areas to “earn” their UBW resources and this may require changes both within cosponsor organisational set-ups and responsiveness of individual staff within Joint Teams. An overly static interpretation of this recommendation carries a risk that cosponsors take their share in the UBW as a “given privilege” as is reported to happen at times.

“One major issue is that of the role of Division of Labour (DOL) lead, where agencies with limited capacity still claim the role of technical lead yet are not effective in the role and often apply a control/ownership approach - while the guidelines talk about both “presence and capacity” as the DOL lead criteria. Many Heads of Agency (HOA) believe that being a Lead will mean they are responsible for representing with government, providing all the technical support and claiming the resources from the development partners. Again this is not how the role was designed, but in practice, many HOA have not received clear information on the DOL lead role from their regional HQs (or mixed messages) and this often leads to problems at the technical level, as the agency technical lead’s ability to convene and promote joint programming is constrained by their own management. This HOA “flag waving” often acts as a disincentive for members of the team” UNICEF respondent to GTT ORG questions.

In order to progress this area more thought needs to go into enabling the UBW to have more “teeth” to hold cosponsors accountable for outputs in “their areas” in the UBW performance monitoring framework. Both the CCO and the PCB should support and monitor transparent processes to come to clear and results based Secretariat / Cosponsor UBW programming and resource allocation.

4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Getting *new* and detailed information on progress has been difficult due to: (i) limited generation of *new* source material that yields information on progress or challenges of GTT implementation, (ii) nature of reporting formats sent out to cosponsors could have benefited from guidance and refocusing of questions to enable more detailed responses (iii) low prioritisation of reporting by cosponsors and donors may mean there are few well-documented examples of progress to draw on, and (iv) time constraints that limited the methodology of the review process.

Actions in the UNAIDS response and follow-up action plan^{viii}, on more than one occasion, are disconnected from the original recommendation of the Independent Assessment and its underlying analysis, making it more difficult to track and assess progress. Lessons for all parties involved in drafting and implementing recommendations can be learned from this exercise: (i) consultants need to understand better institutional processes that translate recommendations into action ensuring that recommendations are really actionable, and (ii) follow-up actions need to articulate the original analysis so they “hit the spot”.

The implementation of GTT recommendations has been under way for four years. Ensuring GTT remains a high priority for UNAIDS, cosponsors, donor and country partners is a key priority for the future. The GTT report does not have a clear monitoring framework, so it is important that key GTT stakeholders continue to report on progress. Recent developments in aid effectiveness such as the Accra Agenda for Action, which commits the development community to accelerating the implementation of the Paris Declaration, and the IHP+ which is trying to put the Paris Declaration principles into action for the health sector and builds on the recommendations from GTT. In these broader development and health sector processes, opportunities for engagement of civil society have been limited and its importance only recently recognised (e.g. in Accra 3rd HLF). Here again, the “Three Ones” as the basis for the implementation of GTT recommendations has ensured civil society involvement from the beginning, experience that needs to be shared. Going forward, work on GTT implementation should engage with partners and processes beyond the AIDS response while taking care not to lose the great progress that has been made in harmonization and alignment through the AIDS response, such as the central engagement of civil society.

These findings reinforce the relevance and strategic importance of GTT processes. For example:

(i) Many of the principles of the Accra Agenda for Action are core to the GTT and Three Ones processes, but they are accompanied by new challenges and a need to scale up and accelerate action in many of the existing GTT areas e.g. the coordination of potentially a much greater number of partners; the need to speed up reform

processes and demonstrate the impact of these reforms on health outcomes; and the need to deliver technical support in ways that support demand, recognising market approaches and the greater influence of government partners on the organisation of technical support arrangements.

(ii) As a signatory of the IHP, making progress towards the recommendations of the GTT, with sustained involvement of civil society, could be seen as UNAIDS' key contribution. GTT experience and progress should be used for strategic purposes and for adding value to the IHP+ processes as they move further down the road. For these reasons, the recommendations of the GTT ORG to the PCB focus on keeping the momentum and spotlight on GTT progress whilst making the follow-up actions more focused and effective.

Recommendations of the GTT ORG to the PCB

1. To ensure that UNAIDS continues to prioritise and make progress towards the Three Ones and the implementation of the GTT recommendations, in support of national AIDS responses results towards Universal Access to prevention, treatment, care and support, it is recommended that the PCB continues to report on GTT implementation, follow-up, and lessons learned for UN reform, for the proceeding year. However, we recommend that after reporting progress through the publication of this report, GTT oversight be reviewed and consideration be given to whether such oversight can be folded into other governance processes within UNAIDS rather than as a stand-alone reference group. We recommend the GTT ORG be considered concluded with the publication of this report and look to the PCB and the results of the second independent evaluation to guide further progress toward the recommendations we have laid out in this report.

2. The GTT ORG recommends that findings/synthesis of (i) Joint Reviews of National AIDS Strategies and CHAT reviews and (ii) Annual Reviews of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes are shared with PCB members during regular GTT reporting sessions in order to establish a monitoring progress. The Joint Reviews, including the CHAT, will permit global synthesis and analysis and should provide "bigger picture" evidence of harmonisation and alignment of AIDS responses, e.g. if donors are aligning their support in country X what has been the result on the national AIDS resource envelope? Annual Reviews should start providing the PCB with evidence beyond progress indicators on the process of joint working, demonstrating the added-value of Joint Teams and Joint Programmes and how they are contributing to national AIDS responses.

3. Annual Reviews of UN joint working are still in their infancy and are not yet consistently implemented everywhere. We recommend that further studies are conducted (as and when needed) to pin-point specific areas of progress that may not be covered in enough depth through Annual Review processes. For example, analyses of the workings and progress on implementing the division of labour at country level. Additionally we recommend that procedures are put in place by regional support teams and cosponsor agencies for monitoring and oversight of the recommendations of Annual Reviews and additional studies.

4. UNAIDS is commended for its efforts towards increased transparency and accountability through its development and implementation of the UBW Performance monitoring matrix. This tool should be strengthened to enable it to provide increased accountability of individual agencies within the larger UNAIDS programme, which the PCB has already considered an urgent priority. We therefore urge UNAIDS to expand on the work of the Performance matrix to strengthen the role that the tool can play as an accountability tool.

References:

- ⁱ UNAIDS response and follow-up plan, October 2007,
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- ⁱⁱ See UNAIDS website :
<http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/MakingTheMoneyWork/default.asp>
- ⁱⁱⁱ See UNAIDS website
<http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/MakingTheMoneyWork/GTT/>
- ^{iv} HLSP, an Independent Assessment Of Progress On The Implementation Of The Global Task Team Recommendations In Support Of National Aids Responses, May 2007
http://data.unaids.org/pub/ExternalDocument/2007/hlsp_gtt_assessment_item4_3_en.pdf
- ^v Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development / Development Assistance Committee , Accra Agenda for Action, September 2008 :
<http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/58/16/41202012.pdf>
- ^{vi} See 23rd PCB decision 3.2 and 3.2:
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- ^{vii} HLSP, an Independent Assessment Of Progress On The Implementation Of The Global Task Team Recommendations In Support Of National Aids Responses, May 2007
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- ^{viii} UNAIDS response and follow-up plan, October 2007,
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