

PRESS RELEASE

MOPAN calls for long term vision and a revamp of the UNAIDS business model

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Paris – The UNAIDS Joint Programme, consisting of 11 UN cosponsors and a Secretariat, remains the best tool for a coordinated UN response to HIV, but if it is to lead the global AIDS response to and beyond 2030, it must adapt. Modifying its operating model will be necessary to remain fit-for-purpose as it moves towards achieving the 2030 goal of ‘ending HIV as a public health emergency’. This is what MOPAN concludes in its latest assessment of the UNAIDS Secretariat. It calls on the UNAIDS Secretariat together with its stakeholders to consider, what the HIV epidemic will look like beyond 2030, what the comparative advantage of the UN system response will be, and provide the necessary leadership to create a vision for the global AIDS response post the Sustainable Development Goals.

MOPAN presented the assessment of the UNAIDS Secretariat to UN member states, UNAIDS Cosponsors (UN Agencies), and NGO Delegations, alongside Denmark and the U.S. who served as liaisons for the assessment on behalf of the MOPAN membership. The assessment focuses on the global function of the UNAIDS Secretariat, including its fitness for purpose on core functions. It highlights that the UNAIDS Joint Programme has been successful in engaging UN agencies in global and country level responses to HIV, and points out the UN system has a comparative advantage, now and beyond 2030, in setting global norms and providing countries with technical guidance for a multisectoral response.

The MOPAN assessment finds that since its last assessment in 2016, the UNAIDS Secretariat improved performance in a number of areas. Monitoring the epidemic, generating evidence for shaping the global response to the HIV epidemic, supporting global HIV policy processes, advancing norms through policy dialogue with member states, and coordinating joint UN support to countries remain some of its strengths. UNAIDS has created and implemented a process for the development of a joint UN AIDS response workplan, budget and accountability framework, and established an independent evaluation function. Looking forward, the assessment finds that the UNAIDS Secretariat is fit for purpose to play some, albeit not all, of its functions.

The assessment finds three fundamental, interrelated challenges that seriously hamper the UN system’s response to HIV globally. First, the UNAIDS Secretariat has been unable to mobilize adequate resources to fully fund the Joint UNAIDS workplan. Second, years of financial constraints and unmet expectations of the UNAIDS Cosponsors has resulted in strained relationships at the global level. Third, stakeholders are waiting for the UNAIDS Secretariat to lead the development of a vision, sharply focused on HIV, for the global AIDS response towards and beyond 2030 with the role UNAIDS Joint Programme well defined. Although these issues have been highlighted in several earlier reviews, Secretariat and Cosponsors representatives have failed to address them.

“We have made great progress in the global HIV/AIDS response”, says Dr. John Nkengasong, U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Senior Bureau Official for Health Security and Diplomacy of the U.S. Department of State, “but those gains are fragile and HIV/AIDS is still a threat to health, development and security. UNAIDS continues to be our best tool to lead a global response. The MOPAN review provides highlights of the progress made since 2016, but it also



clearly demonstrates that a sharp focus on HIV/AIDS and stronger partnerships within UNAIDS must be the priority going forward. The U.S. is confident the Secretariat will successfully take up this challenge.”

MOPAN recognizes that a coordinated UN system response to HIV remains relevant, now and in the future. Funding for UNAIDS in its current ‘version’ is however drying up. MOPAN challenges the UNAIDS Board and Cosponsors to go back to the drawing board and work seriously to create a renewed vision with an appropriate way of working leading up to and post 2030. The MOPAN assessment suggests they consider a joint programme with fewer Cosponsors and a leaner secretariat function, with improved funding by and accountability to participating Cosponsors. Whatever the solution, it will require not only the Secretariat’s commitment, but also that of its Cosponsors, Member States and civil society partners. “MOPAN’s assessments are always food for thought for both sides”, concluded Erik Brøgger Rasmussen, the Danish Ambassador and Permanent Representative, at the launch on Friday.

For further information on MOPAN’s Assessment of the UNAIDS Secretariat, please contact secretariat@mopanonline.org.