



**Executive Board
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Addendum

Chapter XIII. OTHER MATTERS

A. Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS)

1. The Executive Director of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) addressed the Executive Board, as requested at its second regular session 1996. He stated that the main priority for the Programme in its first four months of operation had been at the country level, with the establishment of 103 country-based theme groups, covering 109 countries. Where present, the six co-sponsoring organizations of UNAIDS were members of the theme groups, and in many countries, other United Nations system organizations were members. Governments were also represented in a majority of the theme groups, either as full members or as observers. He further noted that more than three quarters of the theme groups were chaired by the representative of the World Health Organization while 16 per cent were chaired by UNDP Resident Representatives. It was recommended that, in order to increase diversity, the chairs of the theme groups be selected on a rotating basis among the co-sponsors.

2. The Executive Director informed the Executive Board that 12 of 20 UNAIDS country programme advisers (CPAs) selected were in place. It was expected that some 30 CPAs would be appointed by the end of June 1996.

3. UNAIDS and UNDP had signed an agreement establishing a working arrangement for the provision of administrative support services to UNAIDS country-level activities, including disbursements of funds for national HIV/AIDS activities. The Executive Board was informed that two of 22 national programme officers (NPOs), in Thailand and Botswana, were acting as UNAIDS focal points and one United Nations Volunteers specialist was acting as UNAIDS focal point in El Salvador. Countries where national programme officers would act as UNAIDS focal points were being identified on a case-by-case basis. The arrangements for fully integrating NPOs were the following: (a) where there was no CPA, UNDP NPOs could act as CPAs, devoting half of their time to the theme group work; (b) in that capacity, the UNAIDS focal point should report in the same manner as the other CPAs, first to the chairperson of the theme group, and then to the UNAIDS secretariat; and (c) all NPOs (whether UNAIDS focal points or not) would be included in the UNAIDS information network and could receive the same training as UNAIDS field staff.

4. He informed the Executive Board that a UNAIDS staff member would be posted to the Office for United Nations System Support and Services (OUNS). Training in the area of HIV/AIDS for resident coordinators, both at the country level and at the Turin Centre, was also proceeding. Steps were also being taken towards greater harmonization of activities of the co-sponsors at the global level, an area in which continued work was needed. The Executive Director underlined the need to concentrate efforts on youth, as over 50 per cent of new HIV infections occurred in those under 24 years of age, with the majority in those much younger than 20. In that regard, education was a key component of UNAIDS work at the country level, with successful collaboration among United Nations organizations already seen.

5. Given the difficult financial situation of some co-sponsors, resource mobilization was a key priority. While it had initially been hoped that financing could come from the core budgets of the co-sponsors, it now appeared that supplementary funding was needed. A joint resource mobilization effort for co-sponsors activities, the "Global Appeal", had been discussed recently by the Committee of Co-sponsoring Organizations, with a workplan soon to be finalized.

6. In conclusion, the Executive Director cited the obstacles faced in establishing a joint and co-sponsored programme, including resistance to any new programme, synchronization of governance arrangements, the structural and programmatic differences among the co-sponsors, lack of decision-making power at the country level for the representatives of some co-sponsors, and differing planning cycles. He also noted that UNAIDS was not yet fully staffed. Plans for the immediate future, to be discussed at the Programme Coordinating Board in June 1996, included further development of UNAIDS planned activities and of coherent, joint plans with co-sponsors, co-ownership with all co-sponsors, particularly at the country level, a framework for evaluation and monitoring, and elaboration of best practices.

7. Several delegations took the floor to express their appreciation for the statement. Queries were raised as to what the Executive Board could do to facilitate the work of UNAIDS at the country level, on the role of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in UNAIDS, the effectiveness of UNFPA in UNAIDS at the country level, and the reasons for problems in staffing. Information on the priorities of UNAIDS was also sought, particularly in the most vulnerable countries.

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8. The Executive Director responded that the Executive Board could insure that UNDP and UNFPA had the resources they needed to continue to work on HIV/AIDS activities. The Board could also encourage the support of UNAIDS by the two organizations and the collaborative work of NPOs with UNAIDS. He noted that there were five representatives of NGOs on the Programme Coordinating Board. Effective work was under way in countries where there had been strong cooperation, with Governments and with NGOs. With regard to priorities, he emphasized that the work of UNAIDS was for the very long term, and that strengthening the capacity of countries was of vital concern. In that regard, there could be no one single approach since UNAIDS had to promote a double strategy, which included both risk reduction and vulnerability reduction. The contribution of UNFPA had been very effective, and in cooperation with intercountry teams, the purchase of condoms in the effort to reduce risk, was now being discussed. Staff for UNAIDS was selected on the basis of merit and quality as well as diversity on a geographical basis. He noted that 40 per cent of the professionals in UNAIDS were women.
