

# CORPORATE STRATEGY ON HIV/AIDS

HIV/AIDS



## I. THE CHALLENGE

Twenty five years into the AIDS epidemic, the number of new HIV infections has yet to decline. Almost 40 million people around the world are living with HIV and AIDS — half of them women. The epidemic has cost more than 25 million lives, and in 2005 nearly three million people died of AIDS-related causes.

The AIDS epidemic has swiftly escalated from a public health challenge into an unparalleled development crisis. AIDS has reversed valuable development gains, and resulted in illness and death among the most productive age group of societies. The long-term human development impact is felt in all sectors of public and private life. National and local budgets have been strained by AIDS-related costs, sectors such as education and health are being deprived of skilled workers, and the capacity of various sectors to sustain previous levels of productivity and services is weakened. The epidemic has impoverished families and communities, and has resulted in social exclusion and countless human rights violations. Women and girls are particularly vulnerable to HIV and its impacts, and bear the burden of providing care for affected families.

Action on a much larger scale is needed to address the rapidly expanding epidemic, not only to support the hardest-hit nations, but also to curtail the explosive spread in parts of the world where it is now expanding. An extraordinary multi-sector commitment and response embedded in the values and principles of human rights and gender equality is urgently required.

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## II. UNDP'S CONTRIBUTION AS A COSPONSOR OF UNAIDS: DEVELOPING NATIONAL CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO AIDS

As a cosponsor of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), UNDP has a specific and well-defined role in the overall response of the United Nations system and in helping countries to implement the 2001 Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS as well as in achieving the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

In 2005, the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors recommended several actions and strategies to strengthen cohesion of national responses to HIV. The UNAIDS Cosponsors and Secretariat adopted these recommendations and agreed on a division of labour taking into consideration agencies' mandates, comparative advantages and strengths. Under this division, UNDP is the lead organization for addressing HIV and development, governance, mainstreaming, human rights and gender.

As the largest development agency in the world, UNDP is strategically placed to provide comprehensive support to countries in addressing the development challenges and impacts of the AIDS epidemic. Working through its network of 166 country offices, UNDP's response strategy focuses on three services that are complementary and mutually reinforcing: (i) HIV/AIDS and Human Development; (ii) Governance of HIV/AIDS Responses; and (iii) HIV/AIDS, Human Rights and Gender.

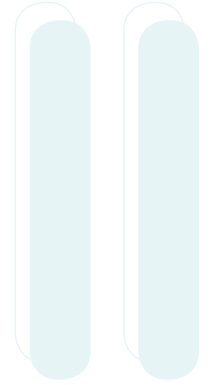
<sup>1</sup> The Declaration of Commitment, adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (UNGASS) in June 2001 articulates strategies and measurable goals to reverse the epidemic and calls for resources commensurate with the challenge.

<sup>2</sup> To respond to global development challenges, UN member states pledged to meet the eight Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by 2015, to promote poverty reduction, education, maternal health, gender equality, and combat child mortality, AIDS and other diseases.

<sup>3</sup> The Lead Organization serves as a single entry point for government and other relevant country-level stakeholders requiring support within a particular UNAIDS technical support area. The Lead Organization is primarily responsible for coordinating the provision and/or facilitation of this technical support.

1. Addressing the critical nexus between **HIV and human development** through mainstreaming HIV into development plans, promoting enabling macroeconomic policy options for sustained financing of AIDS responses, and building capacity for increased access to AIDS medicines;
2. Strengthening the capacity of national authorities to more effectively **govern the AIDS response**, and supporting harmonization and alignment of UN system and donor support to national strategies and programmes; and
3. Promoting **human rights and gender equality** to reduce vulnerability to HIV, strengthening involvement of people living with HIV in AIDS responses, and addressing stigma and discrimination against people living with and affected by HIV.

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## 1: HIV/AIDS AND HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

HIV strikes at the core of human development. Loss of life and weakening of human capabilities deprive households and communities of their most valued resources. It deprives sectors such as health, education and agriculture of skilled workers and reduces productivity. Lack of capacity in these sectors to deliver services is detrimental to communities. In its efforts to support countries in evaluating and mitigating the impact of HIV on human development, UNDP focuses on multi-sector responses that mainstream HIV in national development plans - including poverty reduction strategies, sector programmes and decentralized plans. It supports capacity development for enabling macroeconomic frameworks that promote sustained financing of AIDS responses and for ensuring increased access to low-cost, quality AIDS medicines for those in need.

### a) Mainstreaming into Development Plans and Poverty Reduction Strategies

Mainstreaming HIV into national development planning processes and poverty reduction strategies is critical to ensuring an effective multi-sector and multi-stakeholder response. To address the multiple dimensions of the AIDS epidemic HIV responses must be implemented across sectors, institutions and decentralized programmes. UNDP develops capacity of national partners to ensure AIDS responses are fully costed and integrated into national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

### b) Macroeconomic Frameworks for Sustained Financing

Donor resources for HIV have significantly increased over the last few years. The large influx of foreign financial aid can pose challenges for macroeconomic stability in low income countries and negatively impact inflation and foreign exchange rates. UNDP supports countries to manage substantial additional resources for HIV by promoting enabling macroeconomic and sectoral policies and by developing their capacity to fully cost and budget AIDS responses in MDG-based development strategies.

### c) Intellectual Property Rights and Access to Antiretrovirals (ARV)

While low-cost antiretroviral medicines are now more commonly available, only a small portion of the people who need them in developing countries have access. The complex web of intellectual property rights and trade agreements often hinder access to these medicines. The World Trade Organization's Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights contains under-utilized flexibilities and safeguards which could be useful in improving access to ARVs. UNDP develops capacity of governments to incorporate best practice intellectual property provisions through south-based exchange, and helps in the review of national patent laws to improve access to ARVs.



## 2: GOVERNANCE OF HIV/AIDS RESPONSES

The AIDS epidemic is both an emergency requiring immediate action, and a development crisis necessitating a long-term response. The global community and developing countries in particular are faced with the difficult task of responding to the exceptional proportions and complexities of the AIDS crisis. Country responses must involve both decentralized action and participation of multiple stakeholders that are successfully coordinated at the national level.

To address these challenges an effective governance approach for large scale multi-sectoral planning and implementation of AIDS responses is needed. Through the UN Resident Coordinator system, UNDP supports harmonization and alignment of UN system and donor assistance to national AIDS authorities and provides support for the implementation of the *Three Ones* principles for coordination of national responses. UNDP strengthens links between the AIDS response and wider development efforts, supports participatory and transparent decision-making and promotes civil society participation in national AIDS responses.

### a) Harmonized UN Support to National AIDS Responses

Ensuring greater harmonization and alignment of international support is critical to avoid duplication and fragmentation as well as minimize the transaction costs related to AIDS responses. As steward of the Resident Coordinator system, UNDP supports a coherent response by the UN system at country level. UNDP together with the UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors and UN Development Group, provides support for the functioning of Joint UN Teams on AIDS at country-level with unified and coordinated UN plans in support of national AIDS strategies.<sup>4</sup> UNDP promotes implementation of the *Three Ones* principles through policy advice and strategic technical assistance.

## THE THREE ONES

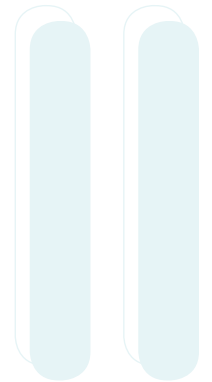
In April 2004 key donors reaffirmed their commitment to strengthening national AIDS responses. They endorsed as principles the *Three Ones*.

- One agreed AIDS action framework.
- One national coordinating authority.
- One agreed country level monitoring and evaluation system.

### b) Strengthening Partnership between Government and Civil Society

UNDP develops the capacity of civil society entities to participate in the design, implementation and evaluation of AIDS responses. In addition, it works with countries to address the human resource capacity challenges generated by the epidemic. UNDP supports countries to implement decentralized programmes that strengthen the interface between civil society, communities, parliaments and local governance systems to improve participation and service delivery. By engaging with various stakeholders and creating safe spaces for debate and discussion, UNDP helps countries establish the structures and mechanisms that can be used to enhance transparency in terms of decision making, responsibilities and accountability.

<sup>4</sup> In order to develop a more coherent and cohesive United Nations system response to AIDS, the Global Task Team recommended the establishment of joint United Nations teams on AIDS at the country level – to develop unified United Nations country support programmes on AIDS. In response to the recommendation, the UN Secretary-General directed all Resident Coordinators to establish joint United Nations teams on AIDS.



### 3: HIV/AIDS, HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENDER

Human rights violations and inequitable gender relations continue to fuel the spread of the HIV epidemic. Protecting the rights of people living with HIV and promoting gender equality are essential for reducing vulnerability to HIV and scaling-up national responses. UNDP supports countries in creating an enabling human rights environment to protect the rights of people living with HIV, women and vulnerable groups. This includes addressing stigma, discrimination, and gender relations that render women and girls vulnerable to infection, and promoting legislative and other measures to ensure the full enjoyment of human rights.


#### a) Human Rights, Legislation, Stigma and Discrimination

Violations of human rights as well as widespread stigma and discrimination hamper access to prevention, treatment and support services for people living with HIV and marginalized groups that are particularly vulnerable to infection. Supportive law and policy frameworks are essential in addressing HIV. UNDP strengthens the capacity of countries to review, adopt, implement and enforce legislation that upholds human rights. This helps create an enabling environment for increased access to HIV related services for those in need. To address marginalization, social exclusion and discrimination, UNDP collaborates with key stakeholders – including government, civil society, religious and community leaders, media practitioners and artists – to promote human rights and transform negative social perceptions relating to people living with HIV and vulnerable groups.

#### b) Gender Equality

The growing feminization of the AIDS epidemic is of critical concern and reveals the disparities between men and women in accessing information, generating livelihood opportunities, negotiating safe sex and protecting themselves from HIV. UNDP supports governments, community organizations and civil society to tackle the underlying causes of the epidemic such as gender inequality and power relations. It develops capacities of national partners to effectively integrate gender concerns into AIDS responses. UNDP also helps countries address issues such as women's inheritance and property rights and emphasises the critical role of men and boys in championing gender equality for a strengthened AIDS response. Programmes are based on the premise that the norms and values that make women and girls more vulnerable to HIV can and must be changed with commitment from both men and women.

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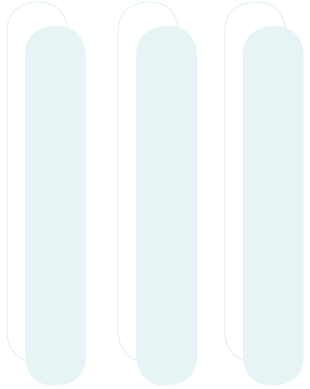
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**c) Greater Involvement of People Living with HIV/AIDS**

It has been shown that where people living with HIV take the lead in the response to the epidemic, the effects are far-reaching and more sustainable. It is a priority that networks and organizations of people living with HIV be strengthened to facilitate their full participation in the AIDS response. UNDP promotes the active and meaningful involvement of people living with HIV in planning, implementation and monitoring of national responses to the epidemic. In addition, it strengthens collaboration between networks of people living with HIV, national governments and international partners for a more synergistic response at all levels.

**WE CARE, UNDP’S WORKPLACE PROGRAMME**

UNDP is committed to providing a work environment free of stigma and discrimination, and ensuring protection of the rights of staff members living with and affected by HIV. The main objective of the We Care Programme is to ensure the full implementation of the UN Personnel Policy on HIV/AIDS in accordance with the ILO Code of Practice on HIV/AIDS and the World of Work. The programme promotes access for all staff members and eligible dependents to adequate care, treatment and support, voluntary counselling and testing, and prevention through information and learning.



### **b) Global Joint Problem-Solving and Implementation Support Team**

The UN system-Global Fund Global Joint Problem-solving and Implementation Support Team (GIST) was established in 2005, as a forum for international and multilateral partners to mobilize and harmonize effective support to address bottlenecks and challenges to accelerated implementation of national AIDS responses.

The GIST, which brings together UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, the UNAIDS Secretariat, the World Bank and the Global Fund, has promoted problem-solving and concerted action to accelerate implementation of AIDS programmes, and has resulted in more harmonized approaches among various multilateral partners to address bottlenecks to 'making the money work.' GIST has initiated and facilitated specific actions to unblock country-level bottlenecks in several areas including procurement and supply management, governance, management capacity, coordination and harmonization. UNDP as part of the GIST core team is intensively involved in coordinating support to address country level governance and programmatic capacity issues. It has also helped tackle global and regional institutional bottlenecks relating to policies, procedures and practices of multilateral institutions and international partners.

UNDP uses various approaches, methodologies and tools including policy advice, technical support, leadership capacity development and knowledge management for generating action at scale to halt and reverse the spread of the AIDS epidemic.

UNDP provides a range of services to governments, national stakeholders and UN Country Teams to support HIV responses. These services are geared to offer high quality technical and advisory support based on global applied research and UNDP regional and national experience. UNDP also supports the implementation of unique methodologies and approaches that embody governance in action. The Leadership Capacity Development and Community Capacity Enhancement methodologies empower leaders and communities respectively to generate commitment and sustainable action to address the underlying causes of the epidemic. In addition, UNDP's knowledge sharing and networking have been effective in scaling up AIDS programmes and in promoting south-based exchange of expertise and knowledge across the world.

Reversing the epidemic requires an unswerving commitment to results, an urgency in action and greater attention to the human rights and gender dimensions of HIV. UNDP's AIDS programme is an essential component of the UN system response to the epidemic. It mobilizes a wide range of stakeholders and supports countries to generate action to address the epidemic.

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### III. MAKING THE MONEY WORK

While countries are receiving more funding for AIDS responses than ever before, there is a greater need to ‘make the money work’ and generate sustainable results. UNDP has been at the forefront of helping countries make more effective use of AIDS resources, both through its partnership with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria as well as through its work under the recently established UN system-Global Fund Global Joint Problem-Solving and Implementation Support Team.

#### a) UNDP-Global Fund to Fight AIDS Tuberculosis and Malaria Partnership

Established in 2002, the Global Fund is an innovative public-private partnership designed to dramatically increase resources for action against AIDS. It has been set up as a performance based funding mechanism to respond to the challenges imposed by three of the world’s most devastating diseases which represent a significant threat to the stability and growth of many countries.

UNDP partners with the Global Fund to contribute to the successful implementation of Global Fund financed programmes at national level. By providing support to Principal Recipients (PR), local implementing partners (Sub Recipients), and Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs)<sup>5</sup>, UNDP develops the capacity of countries to manage and track results of projects.

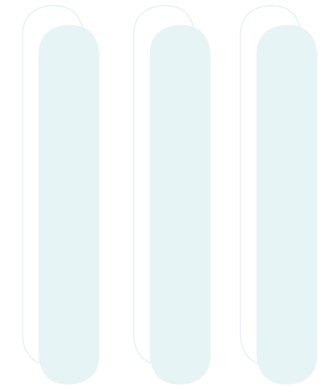
<sup>5</sup> Country Coordinating Mechanisms include representatives from public and private sectors, including governments, multilateral or bilateral agencies, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, businesses and people living with the diseases. These country level partnerships are set up to develop and submit grant proposals to GFATM based on priority needs at the national level and after grant approval, they oversee progress during implementation.

In exceptional circumstances, where there are no alternate PRs available, CCMs and governments may request UNDP to assume PR responsibilities for implementation of activities and to ensure financial accountability. Generally such an arrangement is time-bound. During this period the capacity of one or more local PR candidates is developed to take over and continue the work initiated by UNDP.

In this role UNDP:

- Enhances capacities of national stakeholders to effectively scale up responses to HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria, including project planning, sub-grant and contract administration, fund management, procurement, and monitoring and evaluation.
- Strengthens partnerships with the private sector, civil society and associations of people living with HIV.
- Contributes to the scale up of treatment programmes for HIV, Tuberculosis, and Malaria.

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