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UNAIDS must continue, and African women's rights and leadership must shape its future

The African Women's Prevention Community Accountability Board (AWPCAB) welcomes the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board's decision against sunseting UNAIDS and its support for a transformed Joint Programme. This is an opportunity to strengthen the HIV response and protect the health, dignity and rights of the communities it serves.

The mission is to end AIDS, not to end the commitment to the communities affected by it.

For AWPCAB, the success of this transition must be measured by what it delivers for African women: equitable access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support; respect for our choices and dignity; and meaningful authority in decisions that affect our lives.

African women are rights-holders, decision-makers, and leaders. Our participation must begin before priorities are set, budgets allocated, and institutional arrangements agreed. We must have the information, resources, and authority to shape those decisions and hold institutions accountable.

We support reform that makes UNAIDS more responsive to countries and communities. Women's rights, gender equality, non-discrimination, and community leadership must guide its priorities, financing, implementation, and measures of success.

Equality and equity must advance together. Equal rights must be matched by resources and support that address the different barriers people face. Everyone must be able to access affordable, quality healthcare delivered with dignity, confidentiality and respect for informed choice, regardless of their identity, HIV status, circumstances, or ability to pay.

Our priorities for a rights-centred transition

We call on UNAIDS, its Cosponsors, governments and funding partners to:

- 1. Guarantee meaningful African women's leadership and decision-making power:** Establish transparent representation for women-led community organisations in transition planning, governance, budget decisions and oversight. Provide access to proposals and budgets early enough to influence them. Participation must carry decision-making power, not simply a seat in the room.
- 2. Protect uninterrupted and equitable access to HIV services:** Publish funded plans to ensure institutional changes do not interrupt prevention, treatment, care or support. Services must respect informed choice, confidentiality and dignity, with accessible ways to report and resolve mistreatment or exclusion. Plans and budgets must address transport costs, inaccessible information, service costs, caregiving responsibilities and other barriers to care.
- 3. Fund women-led community action directly and sustainably:** Provide predictable, accessible, multi-year funding for community-led services, prevention, advocacy and accountability, including staff and organisational costs. Funding arrangements must recognise community expertise, with application and reporting requirements that do not exclude smaller organisations. Women-led organisations must be resourced partners, not substitutes for public services.
- 4. Make non-discrimination enforceable:** Establish clear standards against stigma and discrimination, confidential and accessible complaints processes, timely responses and corrective action. No one should be denied care, excluded from services or treated with disrespect because of who they are, their HIV status, their circumstances or their ability to pay.
- 5. Resource meaningful participation:** Cover transport, language access and caregiving costs, and compensate community expertise. Participation must not depend on women's unpaid labour or personal resources.
- 6. Make accountability visible and enforceable:** Every transition commitment must identify a responsible institution, budget, deadline, and measurable outcome, with public progress reports. Communities must be able to identify and safely report institutional failures, receive timely responses, and secure corrective action, with clear routes to escalate unresolved failures. Resource community monitoring without compromising confidentiality.
- 7. Ensure national ownership includes community ownership:** Country-led reform must include the voices and priorities of women-led organisations and communities. National ownership cannot mean government decision-making without meaningful public participation.

Community representation must deliver influence

We welcome the protection of human rights and gender equality in the strategic direction for the transition, alongside its emphasis on community leadership. We also welcome the provision for two community representatives on the Transition Task Team, nominated by the PCB NGO delegation.

Representation must connect to wider community participation. Representatives need transparent selection processes, opportunities to consult women-led organisations and communities, and clear responsibilities to report back. Their participation must carry influence over decisions.

We will assess the transition through concrete questions:

- Are HIV services continuing without interruption?
- Can women-led organisations influence decisions?
- Is funding reaching community priorities?
- Are rights being protected?
- When communities identify a failure, does corrective action follow?

We stand ready to contribute to a stronger, more accountable UNAIDS. Governments, international institutions, and funding partners must fulfil their responsibilities, and communities must have the authority and resources to scrutinise delivery.

Our welcome is therefore also a demand: **build UNAIDS' future with African women, not merely for us.**

Our people. Our health. Our rights. Our future.

End AIDS. Uphold rights. Resource community leadership.

FOR ENQUIRIES

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