

UNAIDS Statement at the Executive Board of UNICEF
First Regular Session
8 February 2023

Thank you, Madam President.

I would firstly like to commend UNICEF for its valuable and impactful contribution to the Joint Programme and the Global AIDS response. During 2022, UNICEF served as chair of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations (CCO), the 11 United Nations agencies that together make up UNAIDS. Under the leadership of Executive Director, Ms. Catherine Russell, UNICEF was able to bring attention to the impact of HIV on children and adolescents. We congratulate ED Russel and her team for their leadership and excellent convening in 2022, which was a difficult and challenging year for implementation. A warm welcome again to Associate Director Anurita Bains and greetings to the amazing and committed HIV team at UNICEF.

One of the most visible inequalities of the AIDS response is the failure to provide life-saving treatment to all children and adolescents living with HIV who need it. The Global AIDS Strategy and the Political Declaration on HIV and AIDS of 2021 provide an opportunity to redirect our attention and redouble our efforts to end AIDS in children.

As co-convenors of the Global Alliance to End AIDS in Children, we congratulate UNICEF for its active engagement at the ministerial level meeting held at the launch of the Global Alliance to end AIDS in children earlier this month in Tanzania. Ministers and representatives from twelve African countries committed and laid out their plans to end AIDS in children by 2030. International partners have set out how they would support countries in delivering on those plans.

The impact of the Joint Programme in the global HIV response is clear and robust - incredible progress and results for people affected by HIV and impacts that go far beyond HIV. We must preserve, protect and accelerate this.

We thank UNICEF's board for instituting debates on the decisions of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board. This ensures governance coherence across United Nations bodies.

Its multistakeholder nature, achieved by hosting the affected communities as members, gives the PCB great credibility in its policy setting role, ensures that decisions are rooted in evidence, and allows it to address issues that elsewhere often become politicized.

UNICEF's engagement in the Joint Programme and in the AIDS response goes beyond medical dimensions.eg. the Global HIV Prevention Coalition, where UNICEF co-leads the pillar on prevention among adolescent girls and young women UNICEF also works across the paediatric continuum of care to improve testing, treatment and retention in care for children living with HIV.

Another dimension of UNICEF's engagement is; the Global Accelerator for Paediatric Formulations Network and the joint United Nations Education Plus Initiative.

If we are serious about achieving the targets agreed to by member states in the 2021 Political Declaration, the Global AIDS Strategy and the UBRAF, we must all step up in ways we never have before.

In conclusion, with the science that we have today, no baby needs to be born with HIV or get infected during breastfeeding, and no child living with HIV needs to be without treatment.

UNICEF is an important member of the Joint Programme and it has been instrumental in securing and sustaining gains made in the global AIDS response. Collectively we can end AIDS by 2030 – The Joint Programme offers us a platform to do exactly that.

Thank you.