

Executive Director

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The Rt Hon Andrew Mitchell MP
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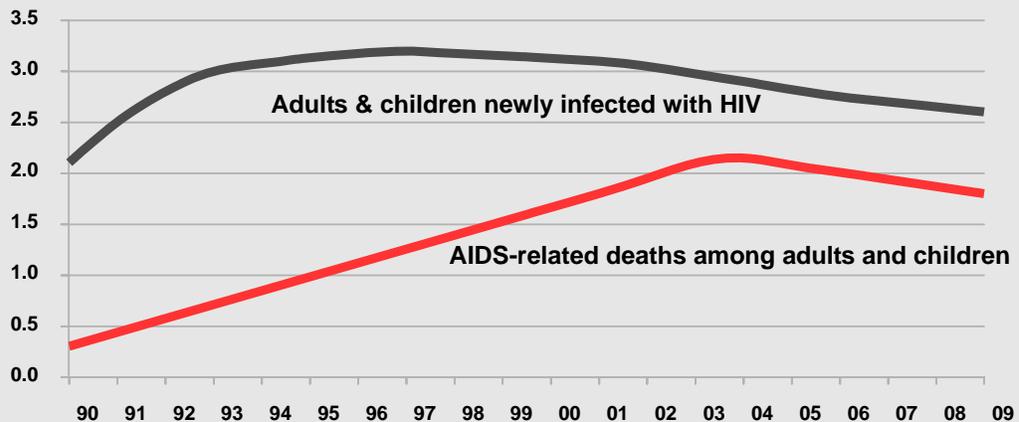
28 March 2011

Dear Secretary of State,

I would like to express my deep appreciation for your recent visit to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) to share with us your insights and critical observations from the Multilateral AID Review. UNAIDS applauds the UK Department for International Development (DFID) for its commitment to deliver value for money for British taxpayers.

This Review concurs with findings of the recent Second Independent Evaluation (SIE), which recommended that UNAIDS be more focused, efficient, and accountable. Through the adoption of the UNAIDS Strategy 2011-2015, we are already implementing a transformative agenda for the global HIV response and an internal process to reform and refocus our role and enhance our performance. The outcomes of this Review provide UNAIDS with a valuable opportunity to reinforce its new strategic directions. I am pleased to submit the UNAIDS response to the Review.

**Estimated number of new HIV infections and deaths due to AIDS
1990-2009 (millions)**



Source: UNAIDS estimates, 2011

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UNAIDS is a leader in advancing and monitoring progress against the epidemic at the global and country levels, measured in infections avoided, people with access to treatment, and deaths averted. New data from 182 countries show remarkable progress towards breaking the trajectory of HIV. At least 56 countries have either stabilized or reduced new HIV infections by more than 25% in the past 10 years. Since 2004, new HIV infections among babies have dropped by 25%—a significant step towards achieving elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV by 2015. More than six million people are on antiretroviral treatment, and AIDS-related deaths have been reduced by over 20% in the past five years. Moreover, the AIDS response presents a successful model for community-based management of chronic diseases.

Evidence of the need for continued investments in the HIV response has never been more compelling. More than 7,000 people are newly infected with HIV every day, outpacing the number of people starting treatment by 2 to 1. Ten million people are still in need of HIV treatment. The financial support of British taxpayers and other donors is essential to sustain the positive results achieved thus far and reap the “prevention dividend” of fewer new HIV infections. In the aftermath of the global economic crisis and continued budget constraints, the “value proposition” of UNAIDS is now more urgent than ever.

At this moment when the international community is facing the first reduction in global funding for AIDS in the last 15 years, the United Kingdom has set a bold example to other donor governments by ensuring that its substantial financial contributions for UNAIDS and the larger global AIDS response are linked to concrete, measurable results.

UNAIDS is a small joint programme with a modest, catalytic budget (3% of overall aid targeting HIV). We have an essential and unique mission: to lead and inspire the world in achieving universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support. By coordinating and working through our cosponsoring institutions, UNAIDS speaks out in defence of human dignity, human rights and gender equality; helps to empower agents of change with strategic information, invigorate political leadership and mobilize resources; fosters inclusive country leadership; and galvanizes social and behavioural change, all of which have enabled the breakthrough progress in the global AIDS response. UNAIDS sets the global AIDS agenda and seek to leverage the contribution of the AIDS response for larger health, development and human rights goals.

Day to day, UNAIDS is engaged in political brokering, community organizing, social mobilization, generating and sharing strategic information, offering evidence-based policy recommendations and giving voice to the voiceless—vulnerable groups and people living with HIV who, too often, face barriers to life-saving services and are excluded from the decision-making processes that affect them most.

UNAIDS represents a unique model of UN reform, as a joint programme that cuts across functions and convenes diverse UN agencies around a common cause. This coordination function advances the reform agenda in the UN system, delivering coherent policies and operational coordination. Our diversity is our strength, derived from mobilizing the expertise, experience and mandate of 10 Cosponsors and deploying the added value of the UNAIDS Secretariat. Together, we help deliver political leadership and advocacy, coordination and joint accountability.

The UNAIDS vision of *zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, zero AIDS-related deaths* is aspirational and will be guided by the achievement of 10 concrete goals in the new UNAIDS Strategy by 2015, five of which are listed below:

- eliminating vertical transmission of HIV, thereby keeping mothers alive, preventing children from becoming orphans, and advancing health for women and children;
- reducing sexual transmission of HIV by 50%, including among young people, men who have sex with men, and in the context of sex work;
- reducing tuberculosis deaths by 50% among people living with HIV;
- ensuring that 13 million people are receiving HIV treatment by 2015; and
- reducing by 50% the number of countries with HIV-related restrictions on entry, stay and residence.

Our newly refocused strategy for getting to zero new infections represents the highest value-for-money proposition: averting the enormous costs of treatment and the wider socioeconomic impacts of AIDS. We aim to drive a revolution in biomedical, behavioural and structural approaches to HIV prevention, led by people living with HIV.

The new UNAIDS Strategy also leverages the role of the AIDS response to improve the health of women and children and makes a critical contribution to the UN Secretary-General's Global Strategy for Women's and Children's Health. UNAIDS is using its mandate and experience to promote the elimination of new infections among children, the reduction by half of AIDS-related maternal deaths, and addressing the specific needs of women and girls in national HIV responses including zero tolerance of gender-based violence.

In alignment with our commitment to deliver maximum value for money, we concur with the Review's findings on the need to improve the organizational performance of UNAIDS. We are dedicated to working smarter. UNAIDS is redeploying its human resources in the field and further strengthening its technical support to strengthen sustainable national institutions in key countries. By moving to reposition UNAIDS within the Resident Coordinator system, we increase accountability at country level. Our country offices will be monitored for their effectiveness, and we will reinforce training and support staff to increase overall performance and results at country level. UNAIDS will build on the strength of its presence in 89 countries by intensifying efforts in those countries where we can have the most decisive impact on the epidemic.

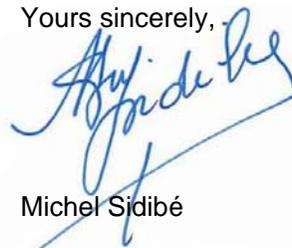
We are also refocusing our efforts to provide greater support for the work of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis, and Malaria. UNAIDS provides the Global Fund Board with strategic advice on prioritizing its investments for maximum impact. We support countries in developing quality proposals based on gaps in the response and provide technical support and systems and capacity strengthening to ensure the most effective and efficient use of mobilized resources. UNAIDS staff in country offices spend up to 50% of their time supporting countries in effective use of Global Fund grants. UNAIDS continues to strengthen the governance and oversight capacities of the Country Coordination Mechanism and plays a critical role in bringing together various sectors to work synergistically for greater impact and country ownership.

We are committed to nurturing a culture where scarce financial resources are frugally and effectively put to work to deliver results. Our new Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) will, for the first time, explicitly link donor resources to results at country level, hold Cosponsors and the Secretariat accountable for performance, and use a rolling allocation plan that allows resources to be redeployed swiftly where they can be used most effectively.

Consistent with the findings of the Review, UNAIDS is moving quickly and decisively to strengthen our strategic and operational posture with a focus on delivering life-saving results. In our ongoing search for innovative ideas and solutions in these areas, UNAIDS will continue to engage with the best and brightest that government, industry and academia has to offer, including key partners in the United Kingdom.

UNAIDS will continue to share with DFID our progress as we implement the new Strategy and UBRAF. We will seek your advice and support as we improve accountability on AIDS across the UN system, particularly where the United Kingdom can play a vital role as a leading donor and Board member.

Yours sincerely,



Michel Sidibé

Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) Response to the UK Multilateral Aid Review March 2011

- **Critical Role in Meeting International Objectives**

In promoting the AIDS+MDGs agenda, UNAIDS is uniting key partners to deliver HIV services that bring critical benefits for larger health and development goals. AIDS remains the leading cause of maternal death worldwide.

The investments made in the AIDS response have produced measurable results, led to an improvement in equity and social justice, and have reinforced the systems that deliver critical services, especially to the most vulnerable groups. Investments in the global AIDS response have a multiplier effect as they contribute toward the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

The new UNAIDS Technical Support Strategy emphasizes the principles of country-led approaches, as well as responsive and well coordinated support from providers, in line with international commitments on harmonization, mutual accountability and the use of country systems. As a result, countries have the capacities and systems to lead the identification, planning and coordination of high-quality technical support towards implementation of effective and sustainable national responses. The Strategy also ensures that support from the UN and other providers in country meets quality standards.

UNAIDS has further scaled up technical support to country partners over the last five years. It has established innovative mechanisms, such as the regional Technical Support Facilities, which have enabled strengthening of regional capacities and increased access to quality technical assistance for implementers including civil society organizations.

- **Critical Role in Meeting UK Aid Objectives**

UNAIDS is committed to ensuring that all investments in the AIDS response work to develop health and community systems on which all health-related MDGs depend. More than any other development issue, the global AIDS response has driven the demand for inclusive governance, which has resulted in more equitable, relevant and rights-based solutions in line with the UK's interest in building democratic institutions and societies.

The role of UNAIDS as a champion for gender equality is clearly articulated in Strategic Direction 3 of the UNAIDS Strategy 2011-2015, with specific goals related to the need for national responses to include the HIV-specific needs of women and girls, and zero tolerance for gender-based violence.

UNAIDS is committed to promote human rights and stand with vulnerable populations, to open political space where their voices can be heard. UNAIDS advocates for and builds capacity to empower those who are most affected to exercise leadership and have full access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support services.

The multi-sectoral nature of the AIDS response requires renewed emphasis on dealing with the socioeconomic barriers to an effective response. UNAIDS has established human rights and gender as a key pillar on par with prevention and treatment in its new Strategy. UNAIDS is an active member of the H8, an informal group of eight health-related organizations.¹

The H8 was created in mid-2007 to stimulate a global sense of urgency for reaching the health-related Millennium Development Goals, and is currently focused on strengthening ownership and alignment of technical assistance to countries.

- **Fragile Contexts**

The relationship between AIDS and state fragility has been looked at over the years and there is no evidence of any direct link. AIDS does not lead to state fragility, even in high prevalence settings, and state fragility as such does not necessarily increase HIV prevalence.

There are many more important factors for the AIDS epidemic, such as displacement, sexual and gender-based violence, mobile populations, isolation versus interaction of populations from different prevalence backgrounds – and in this context especially “post-conflict situations” with high numbers of returnees, high levels of mobility, influx of peacekeepers and humanitarian workers.

These issues have been found to be far more relevant for the HIV epidemic and are covered under the HIV guidelines of the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (the primary mechanism for inter-agency coordination of humanitarian assistance involving key UN and non-UN humanitarian partners), as well as the work that UNAIDS has been doing in relevant countries.

- **Gender Equality**

UNAIDS supports countries to implement the Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV, developed through a wide consultative process involving high-level leaders and experts on women, girls, gender equality and HIV from 51 countries and diverse constituencies. The Agenda for Accelerated Country Action holds the UNAIDS family, individual Cosponsors, the Secretariat, the UN joint teams on AIDS, UNIFEM and other partners accountable for delivering results at country level.

The establishment of UN Women provides an opportunity to put the HIV-related needs of women and girls, in Africa and elsewhere, more firmly on the agenda. UNAIDS is looking forward to engage UN Women as a UNAIDS Cosponsor to restore the dignity and rights of women worldwide and advance the response to HIV.

¹ The Health 8 (H8) include the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation; the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation (GAVI); the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM); the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS); the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA); the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF); the World Bank; and the World Health Organization (WHO).

- **Contribution to results**

As a result of the Second Independent Evaluation (SIE), efforts are ongoing to review the Division of Labour – the delivery mechanism for the UN response to AIDS that ensures accountability for programmatic areas by convenor agencies based on their individual agency mandate and comparative advantage. The new structure is underpinned by a clear role for the UNAIDS Secretariat in: (i) leadership and advocacy; and (ii) coordination, coherence and partnership building. It ensures delivery of the UNAIDS Strategy and supports the mutual accountability of the Secretariat and Cosponsors to enhance programme efficiency and effectiveness and to deliver on the work of the Joint Programme. The Division of Labour is a tool to govern the work of UNAIDS at all levels – global, regional and country.

UNAIDS has also spearheaded the development of a proposed approach for repositioning the role of UNAIDS in the Resident Coordinator system. The Secretariat co-convenes the United Nations Development Group (UNDG) Working Group on Resident Coordinator (RC) System Issues, which aims to strengthen the RC system to support the delivery of UNDG strategic priorities and increase the coherence of UN system support for national responses. UNAIDS co-led an effort to review business practices and progress in four “One UN Pilot” countries, which resulted in a results-based management handbook to harmonize results and reporting.

- **Strategic and Performance Management**

Work is underway to develop – through a fully inclusive stakeholder process - the production of a 2012-2015 Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRAF) with an emphasis on focus and transformation based on managing results against resources. The UBRAF will articulate the Joint Programme's contribution to the operationalization of the UNAIDS Strategy with outcomes linked directly to the Strategy's strategic directions and goals.

The UBRAF will incorporate an Accountability Framework that will measure the achievements and outcomes of the work of the Joint Programme on the global AIDS response, as well as provide a clear linkage between investments and results. Indicators within the Framework will be closely aligned with individual agency corporate frameworks to ensure consistency across the Joint Programme and the governance mechanisms of the individual partners.

Building on the evaluation recommendations and the Board discussions, resource allocation will be made on the basis of epidemic priorities and the comparative advantage of individual Cosponsors and the Secretariat. Funding will also be performance-based and will be targeted for impact.

UNAIDS has spearheaded coherence of the UN work on AIDS at country level by serving as a model for the Delivering as One initiative, enhancing the effectiveness of UN system operations in the field, including through interagency work on the harmonization of business practices.

A survey conducted in 12 countries as part of the independent evaluation demonstrated that “there is clear evidence that joint team working has increased the efficiency and effectiveness of UN support to address HIV, although support for this view was less strong than for evidence of the UN working as a team. In 8 of the 12 countries, the joint team approach appears to be a significant driver of the UN working together and the capacity and commitment of the UNAIDS Country Coordinator and the Resident Coordinator was an important factor in four of these countries.”

The first completed assessment of the Joint Teams and Joint Programmes of Support's Performance (Tanzania) demonstrated that accountability is taken seriously at the country level; i.e. UN agencies are held accountable for key operations and their performance is thoroughly assessed. As a result, the Joint Programme of Support on AIDS was rated the highest most performing among the 11 assessed in 2010.

UNAIDS has an innovative recruitment process, which includes a competitive selection mechanism using a combination of written and oral interviews by a selection advisory panel, followed by a review by an appointment committee. As part of the new Human Resources Strategy of UNAIDS, a competency framework has been introduced and is being integrated into all human resources systems, including recruitment, development and performance management. A comprehensive guide and training on competency-based interviewing is currently being implemented and is mandatory for all participants on selection panels.

- **Financial Resources Management**

The UNAIDS Strategy 2011-2015 aims to target resources where they can make the greatest impact. In the new Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework, the allocation of funds in the Joint Programme will be based on epidemic priorities and the performance of Cosponsors.

Financial allocations are made on a performance basis and through a transparent process of peer review at the mid-term point.

UNAIDS uses the industry standard of OECD approved terminology in its results architecture, providing clear linkages between its results and budget. This is supplemented by in-depth reviews and case studies, which are reported to the UNAIDS Board and published on the UNAIDS website. All financial planning and reporting is also based on the principles of Results-Based Management (RBM).

- **Cost and Value Consciousness**

UNAIDS has been implementing a range of initiatives to improve its efficiency and effectiveness including outsourcing, renegotiating maintenance and production contracts and has already reduced the cost of travel and meetings by its stated target of 25% in 2010.

In December 2010, the UNAIDS Board approved the move to a single administrative system to strengthen the overall delivery of administrative services. This will be achieved by: (i) harmonizing management processes and administrative support at country, regional and HQ levels; (ii) reinforcing transparency and accountability for all UNAIDS resources through the use of a single system for financial management, monitoring and reporting; (iii) eliminating duplications linked to the reconciliation of data between two systems; and (iv) improving efficiency of financial administration, including procurement and financial reporting, while retaining flexibility in operational arrangements, such as the capacity to sub-contract the most cost-effective administrative services providers. The move to the single administrative system will be completed in 2011.

- **Partnership Behaviour**

UNAIDS is committed to leveraging existing and novel partnerships with people, communities, governments and country and global champions to support the implementation of its new Strategy.

As part of its 2011-2015 Strategy, the Joint Programme will develop further its close partnership with pooled funding mechanisms, such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and UNITAID, to increase the impact of their implementation.

UNAIDS is also engaging with new partners to reach out to the broader development and human rights areas, increase south-south collaboration, ensure country ownership and engage emerging economies. UNAIDS is leading a new partnership paradigm creating a movement for social justice to ensure all people have access to health, including the most vulnerable and people living with HIV.

- **Transparency and Accountability**

The Second Independent Evaluation (SIE) reported extensively on the governance structure of UNAIDS and found that the current mechanisms allow all constituencies the ability to influence discussion and decision-making. UNAIDS was the first United Nations programme to have formal civil society representation on its governing body.

Measures implemented by UNAIDS to strengthen accountability include:

- planning and accountability at all levels by each department of the Secretariat and by each Cosponsor;
- a formal declaration of interest policy for all staff with financial authority and all heads of country offices;
- senior staff are also covered by the UN financial disclosure policy;
- the publication of all financial and programmatic reports on the UNAIDS website; and
- the publication on the UNAIDS website of detailed country and other strategic information.

- **Likelihood of Positive Change**

The recommendations of the SIE, which were adopted by the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board, are in the process of being implemented.

The governance structure was carefully reviewed as recommended by the SIE and improvements are ongoing; e.g. the creation of a process of rolling thematic and programmatic evaluations by the Board. Work is underway, through a fully inclusive stakeholder process, on the production of a Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework for 2012-2015.

An impact assessment of the SIE will be undertaken by the end of this year.