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Minutes of the 32nd Session of the Executive Board
(EB32)

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For Information For Review and Advice For Approval

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Executive Summary

- The meeting began with a keynote speech from the Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Republic of Korea, and welcome remarks by the Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.
- Minutes of the 30th meeting Board and 31st Special Session of the Executive Board were adopted (UNITAID/EB32/2019/2 and UNITAID/EB32/2019/3).
- The Executive Director updated the Board on the global health landscape within which Unitaid operates and which shapes its interventions (UNITAID/EB32/2019/4).
- The Chair of the Project Review Committee reported on the committee's recent work and its reflections on the Midterm Strategy Review.
- Decisions relating to the financial performance for 2018 (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R1), liquidity policy (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R2) and foreign exchange risk mitigation policy (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R3) were adopted.
- The outcome of the Midterm Strategy Review concluded that the 2017-2021 Strategy remains valid, and that Unitaid should continue to focus its work on innovation and access in the three disease areas but should explore carefully opportunities in adjacent areas and new technologies (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R4).
- No immediate conclusion was reached on the case for consideration for Chagas disease. The Executive Board agreed to reconvene to further consider this matter in the coming weeks.
- The positive portfolio performance was welcomed by the Board, including efforts for continual operational improvements.
- High-level principles to guide future discussions on expansion of Unitaid's governance structure and resource mobilisation were adopted (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R9).
- Revised terms of reference for the Finance and Accountability Committee and the Policy and Strategy Committee were adopted (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R5).
- Meeting dates for 2019 and for 2020 were adopted (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R6).
- Maria Luisa Escorel De Moraes was elected as the new Vice-chair of the Board (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R7).
- And finally, the Board adopted a vote of thanks to Marta Maurás Pérez, the outgoing Chair, and welcomed the new Chair, Marisol Touraine (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R8).

1. Opening session

The keynote speech by Mr Kim Ganglip, Vice-Minister of the Ministry of Health and Welfare of the Republic of Korea, highlighted recent achievements including a 5-year action plan for the prevention and control of HIV/AIDS, and actions for early interventions, testing and treatment for malaria.

His comments were reinforced in the welcome remarks from Mr Kang Jeong-sik, Deputy Minister for Multilateral and Global Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who emphasised his country's commitment to the work of Unitaid in kick-starting innovation and increasing access to next-generation diagnostics and new treatments. In this context, the Board welcomed the signature of a Memorandum of Understanding between Republic of Korea and Unitaid that will see a 25% increase in current funding for 2019-2021.

2. Introductory remarks and adoption of the EB32 agenda

The Board adopted the agenda of the meeting (UNITAID/EB32/2019/1/REV2).

3. Minutes from previous meetings

The Board adopted the minutes of the 30th Executive Board meeting of 5-6 December 2018 (UNITAID/EB32/2019/2) and of the 31st Special Session of 28 May 2019 (UNITAID/EB32/2019/3).

4. Report from the Executive Director

The Executive Director complemented his detailed report (UNITAID/EB32/2019/4) by addressing the global health landscape in which Unitaid operates and shapes its interventions.

Key evolutions over the past 5 years included the evolution from government-centric to multi-stakeholder approaches; move from donor-driven agendas to national strategies based on clear needs; and the development of more objective performance-based global health spending.

Unitaid has aligned with these in a number of ways. The first is the move from a vertical disease approach to a more holistic approach, with opportunities for more horizontal and transversal gains. The second is the political focus on universal health coverage as part of the Sustainable Development Goal 'SDG 3', which has also brought an emphasis on primary health care as a functional objective. The third is the urgency for improved efficient coordination of responses to global health issues, not only at the UN inter-agency level but involving all stakeholders.

The challenge of anti-microbial resistance (AMR) was a good example of this, in which Unitaid is now playing an important strategy role through the Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance and at an operational level with 65% of its portfolio now addressing AMR. It was noted that Unitaid is invited to be part of the June 2019 G20 meeting, hosted by the Japanese government, which has global health as a central theme.

The Executive Director reiterated that while Unitaid is working to be a more holistic and systemic solutions-focused organisation, it will not lose focus on the fight against the three disease areas at the core of its mission.

Issues raised by Board members included the importance of increasing the number of quality proposals from implementers from Southern hemisphere proponents, as well as the importance of encouraging a greater role for civil society, WHO and country coordinating mechanisms.

5. Report from the Chair of the Proposals Review Committee

The report from the Proposals Review Committee (PRC) focused on its work relating to specific grant development proposals and input to the Board's Midterm Strategy Review.

Two major grant agreement development packages were reviewed during the first half of 2019, relating to better tools for the diagnosis and treatment of Plasmodium vivax malaria, and accelerating impact of long-acting technologies in low- and middle-income countries. It was noted that e-votes for these proposals will be launched after the Board meeting. It was noted that efforts to improve planning and coordination has led to shorter grant agreement development (GAD) review timelines.

Turning to the Midterm Strategy Review, the Chair of the PRC highlighted some potential areas the Committee had identified where Unitaid's engagement or increased attention could add value. These included digital health technologies, help for countries in selecting the right technologies, addressing market failures especially for paediatric medicines, and addressing wider issues relating to access.

The Board also considered the need to revise the current composition of the Committee to add expertise in community engagement and intellectual property issues to ensure that the PRC is equipped for the range of proposals that it is asked to assess.

6. Report from the Finance and Accountability Committee

The Board noted the report from 22nd meeting of the Finance and Accountability Committee, and its recommendations (UNITAID/EB32/2019/5).

a) Financial performance 2018

The Board adopted the audited financial statements for 2018 (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R1). The Board noted that a clean audit opinion from external auditors was received for 2018, including on progress on actions from outstanding recommendations made in past audits. There were three recommendations for the 2018 audit, all of which relate to grant management and are already in process and should be closed by the end of the year.

b) Liquidity policy and Foreign exchange risk mitigation policy

The Board adopted a Liquidity policy (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R2) and a Foreign exchange risk mitigation policy (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R3).

The policies to set out an agreed approach to ensuring appropriate cash balances to cover expected disbursements and operating expenses, as well as approved options for mitigating foreign exchange risks given that Unitaid expenses are made in USD and CHF, whilst its contributions are received in a range of other currencies.

c) Outcome of Joint Finance and Accountability Committee and Policy and Strategy Committee session

The Board noted the minutes of the 11 April 2019 joint meeting of the FAC and PSC committees (UNITAID/EB32/2019/7). It noted the recent risk management work and the assurances following an external audit that controls in place are operating effectively. Internal review processes are in place to ensure active monitoring by the FAC.

Some opportunities were identified to further refine the processes relating to Areas for Interventions, Calls for Proposals and Grant Agreement Development. These will be actioned in 2019 and monitored by the FAC and PSC, as well as being addressed as part of the Midterm Strategy Review discussions.

7. Midterm review of the implementation of the strategy

d) Key findings from the Midterm Strategy Review

The Board acknowledged the preparatory work undertaken by the PSC to contribute towards the Midterm Strategy Review, and the discussions of the PSC workshop held on 28 May 2019, and adopted the minutes from the Policy and Strategy Committee meeting held on 10 April 2019 (UNITAID/EB32/2019/8/Minutes).

Finally, Board endorsed the following conclusions from the midterm review of the Unitaid Strategy 2017-2021:

- The 2017-2021 Strategy remains valid based on the midterm review.
- Unitaid should continue to focus its work on innovation and access in within its mandate (malaria, tuberculosis, HIV and coinfections, RMNCAH and AMR), but should carefully explore opportunities in adjacent areas and new technologies.
- The organisation has developed a robust operating model that is fit for purpose, thorough and systematic. Questions were asked on whether any opportunities had been missed because of lack of adaptability or flexibility of the model, and this should be considered during the remaining years of the Strategy and ahead of the Strategy from 2022. The possibility to consider new approaches for exceptional opportunities was supported when warranted.
- The Board recommended that the secretariat continue to pursue improvements in the scalability model. Reinforcing the importance of partnerships, the Board recommended strengthening existing partnerships and exploring new partnerships to maximize the scalability and impact of Unitaid investments. Increasing engagement with civil society is

seen as a key element of achieving this. The Board also called for the development of a framework for country engagements.

The Board adopted the report of the midterm strategy review (UNITAID/EB32/2019/10) and affirmed in its Resolution that Unitaid is on track to deliver on its Strategy and to create greater impact for the global health response (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R4).

There was also reflection on the place of Unitaid in the broader global health response, especially in areas where innovation is key and the assessment of opportunities that may fit and align with our expertise and represent potential, even if they do not fall directly in our current mandate. The Secretariat is currently assessing future areas for exploration and in parallel considering if it is warranted to have a limited proportion of portfolio for new approaches in innovation. This will be discussed at the next meeting of the PSC on 15 October 2019.

8. Case for consideration: Chagas disease

Part of the discussions on the Midterm Strategy Review include the exploration of new opportunities to apply Unitaid's expertise, including the potential relevance for Chagas disease as a case for consideration (Case for consideration – Chagas disease, UNITAID/EB32/2019/11).

The Unitaid Secretariat undertook a high-level exploration of neglected tropical diseases (NTDs), following the request from the Board in March 2016 to associate the Midterm Strategy Review with a review of NTDs. Multiple specific NTDs were reviewed at a high level, in particular those accounting for the higher mortality burdens. Chagas disease was selected by the secretariat as a case for consideration based on analysis of increased global interest and funding commitments, the promising development pipeline for better diagnostic tools and treatment, and the low access rates for patients in endemic countries.

The Board members had substantive discussions on the Chagas disease case. While there was broad support from many Board members, no immediate conclusion was reached on the case for consideration. Questions were raised by some members on the comparison with alternative investment opportunities, implications for the organization's operating model and the overall 'fit' with Unitaid's mission and Constitution.

It was agreed that the Chair will organize a call with a view to arriving at a consensus and that the Board will reconvene on this matter in the coming weeks.

9. Portfolio performance

Unitaid has a diverse portfolio of 48 grants, with 63 formulations, medicines, diagnostics and other tools being supported working through 35 grant implementers worldwide, representing some US\$1.3 billion of investments (Unitaid Portfolio Performance, UNITAID/EB32/2019/12).

A selection of specific cases was presented to demonstrate the public health impact of the innovations supported by Unitaid. These included: investments in seasonal malaria

chemoprevention that are expected to avert some 81 million cases, saving an estimated 356,000 lives; innovative vector control through 'next generation' indoor residual spraying that is protecting 76 million people in 28 countries; as well as multiple actions to accelerate patient access to optimal antiretroviral treatments, including key scientific research that changed global treatment guidelines and flagship price reductions leading to wider access in low- and middle-income countries, where over 22 million people are now under antiretroviral treatment.

Against this background, the Board noted the positive performance assessment of the ongoing investments with 82% of all projects either on track or exceeding targets. The Board welcomed the overall positive outcome of key performance indicators for 2018, resulting in effective project implementation, generation of evidence for scale-up and success in reaching people with quality innovative products. The Board also acknowledged efforts for continual operational improvements in areas such as risk management, partnership engagement and performance management.

10. Restricted session on Governance Issues

The following items were adopted in the open part of the meeting:

a) Unitaid Board Evolution

High-level principles were agreed to guide future discussions on expansion of Unitaid's governance structure and resource mobilization (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R9).

b) Updated terms of reference for the Finance and Accountability Committee and Policy and Strategy Committee

The Board approved new terms of reference for the FAC and PSC (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R5).

c) Meeting dates 2019 and 2020

The Board adopted the calendar of meeting dates for 2019 and 2020 (UNITAID/2019/EB32/R6).

11. Any Other Business

There was no other business raised for the Board.

12. Election of the Vice-Chair of the Executive Board and welcoming the new Board Chair

The Board elected by acclamation Maria Luisa Escorel De Moraes (Brazil) as Vice-Chair to serve in an individual and personal capacity for a period of three years, commencing from the end of the 32nd meeting (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R7). The Board thanked Sarah Boulton for her service and active engagement as Vice-Chair over recent years.

This was the final meeting for Marta Maurás Pérez as Chair of the Executive Board and members voted a Resolution to formally thank and acknowledge her contribution and support. The Board also welcomed Marisol Touraine as she prepared to take up her functions as Chair of the Executive Board (UNITAID/EB32/2019/R8).

13. Closure of the Executive Board meeting

Marta Maurás Pérez closed the 32nd meeting of the Executive Board at 17h00.

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