



Unitaid Executive Board Meeting
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Agenda item 3

Minutes of the 39th Session of the Executive Board
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For Information For Review and Advice For Approval

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Executive Summary

The Executive Board (EB) meeting acknowledged the important work Unitaid conducted over the past year, noting in particular efforts in key strategic areas such as the strategy development process, management of the external review of Unitaid's current strategy, and the strengthening of Secretariat management and culture. The Board acknowledged major programmatic successes that were achieved by Unitaid throughout the year and Unitaid's contribution under the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A).

Board Members provided suggestions to improve the strategic framework. They were pleased with the strategy's level of ambition and noted the need for the next stage of the strategy development process to focus on what financial and human resources will be required to implement the strategy. They agreed to leverage their engagement with related global health implementing and funding organizations to reinforce the Secretariat's own efforts to galvanize support and partnership.

The Secretariat's analysis of resource mobilization efforts showed that funding needs have been offset by investments from different countries under Unitaid's work within ACT-A and noted the expansion of the donor base. Board Members reaffirmed their commitments to Unitaid and offered support for ongoing resource mobilization efforts. It was agreed that Board Members will take a proactive role in Unitaid's resource mobilization efforts, highlighting the complementarity of mandates and roles of Unitaid and other global health agencies, in particular the Global Fund.

The EB approved the Unitaid budget for 2022 in the amount of US\$ 34.1 million. The update of the Investment Plan for 2022-2023 and the results of the prioritization mechanism showed that an increase in core contributions will be required to secure the planned pipelines for future investments.

The important role of the Proposal Review Committee (PRC) and their substantial additional time investment in different reviews in 2021 was duly noted. The grant extension reviews under the COVID and O2 Requests for Proposals (RfPs) have been complex and created additional workload for the PRC (as well as the Secretariat and the EB), while representing a helpful learning process, demonstrating the ability of Unitaid to respond quickly while highlighting the critical risks and opportunities linked to these investments.

The unanimously re-elected by acclamation Ms. Marisol Touraine to the Office of Board Chair for an additional two-year term. This appointment will take effect at the closure of the first regular EB meeting in 2022 and will extend till June 2024. The extension of the appointment of the current Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Members of both the Policy and Strategy Committee (PSC) and Finance and Accountability Committee (FAC), as well as the Governance Working Group (GWG) leadership and membership, was also approved for a period of six months. The GWG was requested to continue its work on EB composition and evolution, so that the EB could complete its decision during its second meeting of 2022.

1. Opening remarks from the Chair

The Chair of the EB opened the meeting expressing her hope that the Board will be able to adapt to the current constraints of the video conference and have a successful discussion on strategy. She thanked the Board Members from Tokyo and Seattle for their participation despite the timing inconvenience.

The Chair welcomed Ingrid Etoke, the new Alternate Board Member for the Foundations Constituency, Cesar Mufanequico, the new Alternate Board Member for the Communities delegation, Maurine Murenga who will assume the Board Member position for the Communities delegation at the end of the 39th EB meeting and Mi-Joo Hyun representing the Board Member from the Republic of Korea. She also welcomed the presence of the ambassadors of the Kingdom of Morocco, the Republic of Cameroon and the Republic of Angola representing the African Countries Constituency. It was noted that the Republic of Angola would be taking over the Alternate Board Member position as of January 2022.

The main agenda items and decision points were introduced, including the framework of the new strategy, the adoption of the budget for 2022, the renewal of the membership and leadership of the Board committees, the discussion on the evolution of the Board membership and the extension of the mandate of the Board Chair for additional two years.

2. Agenda of the EB39 meeting

The EB adopted the agenda of the meeting (UNITAID/EB39/2021/1/REV1).

3. Minutes from previous meeting: EB38, 16-18 June 2021

The EB adopted the minutes of the 38th EB meeting of June 2021 (UNITAID/EB39/2021/2).

4. Report from the Executive Director

The Executive Director highlighted the challenges faced by Unitaïd in 2021, the progress achieved and the opportunities ahead. He underlined that the pandemic continues to evolve with Omicron and other variants of concern, and the impact of the pandemic on access to health and the fight against HIV, TB and malaria which globally remains a threat. He noted the strength of Unitaïd's portfolio and stressed that the experience Unitaïd has gained in the global response is about care management, access issues, equity and decentralized access to care.

The Executive Director briefed the EB on the progress against the five key priorities set out for him by the EB at the end of last year: i) Reinforce and manage our portfolio; ii) Engage in the COVID-19 response; iii) Develop Unitaïd's Strategy for 2022-26; iv) Mobilize additional resources and leverage partners and v) Enhance staff engagement and well-being.

The Board Members acknowledged the significant amount of work Unitaïd conducted over past year, noting in particular key strategic work including the strategy development process, management of the external review of Unitaïd's current strategy and various initiatives undertaken to strengthen the Secretariat. They expressed appreciation for the transparency and consultative nature of the strategy development process. The Board Members acknowledged the significant programmatic successes achieved by Unitaïd throughout the year and Unitaïd's contribution under the ACT-A. Looking ahead, the Board Members flagged the highly competitive environment in which

Unitaid will need to hold its next replenishment in 2022. They stressed the need to raise Unitaid's visibility, leverage Unitaid's partnerships and pledged their support and advocacy.

5. Update on Strategy 2022-2026 development

The Chair introduced the objectives of the session, which were to provide clear guidance, as well as precise yet constructive feedback to the Secretariat on the strategic framework. She explained that no formal resolution would ensue from the session, in line with the process that was followed for the development of Unitaid's 2017-2022 strategy, and that a vote would be organized later time if deemed necessary. She also clarified that questions pertaining to resourcing, operationalization and prioritization would be addressed in the next phase of work, in 2022.

The Secretariat introduced the revised strategic framework and summarized the key changes that had been made to the document in light of feedback received from the Board Members to date. Following the Secretariat's presentation, the Board Members provided suggestions to improve the strategic framework. Firstly, several Board Members highlighted that the Vision should reference SDG3 and replace the notion of "transforming people's lives", considered too broad. Agreement was reached to reformulate the Vision as follows: "Equitable access to health innovations *to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all*". Secondly, several Board Members felt that the Mission could be more precise. It was agreed the Mission would be redrafted as follows: "We expand the reach of the best health products *for those who need them most*". Thirdly, regarding Strategic Objectives, requests were made by the Board Members to: i) Refer to "health products" rather than "products "under Strategic Objective 1; ii) Include "technology transfer" under Strategic Objective 2, bullet 2; iii) Include "civil society" alongside in-country stakeholders and affected communities under Strategic Objective 3, bullet 2. Fourthly, regarding the programmatic priorities, a suggestion was made to refer to global health "emergencies" rather than global health "threats". Finally, there was agreement to redraft the fourth principle as follows: "Contribute to making health care greener *and more conducive to sustainable development*"; and to replace the language referring to diversity, equity and inclusion in the final paragraph with ensuring "equitable, intersectional and people-centered pathways".

6. CLOSED SESSION for Board Members and Alternates

7. Update on Strategy 2022-2026 development

The Chair underlined the objective of the session which was to provide feedback on the programmatic priorities within the strategic framework and agree on the final text for the overall framework. Several Board Members stressed the importance of continued investment in HIV, TB, malaria and co-infections, and remained supportive of investments in reproductive, newborn and child health, particularly as an integral element of investments in the three diseases. The need for continued investment in TB treatment was underlined. The Secretariat confirmed it intended to continue to monitor developments, recommendations and barriers to access with regard to the three diseases, including TB treatment, and will consider opportunities where Unitaid has a comparative advantage and can make an impact. The Board Members called on Unitaid to update thematic narratives in the next phase of the strategy development process, including more details on the role of the other global health partners, to inform Unitaid's focus. Support was expressed for keeping the door open to new opportunities where Unitaid can make a difference, with the importance of UnitaidExplore being highlighted.

With regard to the broader strategic framework, some Board Members did not feel the inter-relationship amongst the strategic objectives was adequately reflected but it was agreed to move forward and to address this in the context of how the strategy will be operationalized. Several Board Members called for stronger links to the Sustainable Development Goals and the 2030 agenda and it was agreed that the Secretariat would clarify language in the framework related to how Unitaid will respond to global health emergencies as defined by WHO.

The Board Members were pleased that the strategy is ambitious and noted that the next stage of the strategy development process will need to focus on what financial and human resources will be required to implement the strategy. They agreed to leverage their engagement with related global health implementing and funding organizations to reinforce the Secretariat's own efforts to galvanize support and partnership.

8. Update on Resource Mobilization

The Secretariat presented an analysis of Unitaid's resource mobilization efforts over the past years. Despite the risk of decrease in multi-year funding agreements and the reduction of contribution from the UK, it was possible to see that overall the funding levels of Unitaid have been stable between 2018 and 2021. The funding gap has been equalized by the investments from different countries under Unitaid's work within ACT-A. Nevertheless, this raises questions around continuity and the challenge is to convert the one-off ACT-A contributions into sustainable ones.

Unitaid's donor base has grown from 8 donors in 2017 to 14 donors in 2021, despite of the challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic. The recognition of Unitaid's leading role in ACT-A, the overall understanding of Unitaid's specific targets together with the efforts around advocacy, communications and engagement have all contributed to increased visibility, third party validation and have highlighted the importance of working with communities, civil society and strategic partnerships on the issues of early and equitable access.

Looking into the new strategy, the Secretariat highlighted the importance of having a fully funded strategy and the role of the EB in ensuring political and financial commitments during the first two quarters of 2022. In addition, it is crucial to engage new donors such as Portugal and Italy pivoting their contributions into multi-year agreements. It is still expected that 2022 will continue to focus on the response to the current health emergency but Unitaid can leverage on that. There was a 25% increase in Unitaid's presence in the media, with almost 10,000 articles mentioning Unitaid's work around the globe, with stories on oxygen, new treatments but also the role it played to safeguard the 3 epidemics. Looking into the 2022-2026 strategy, there is a need to solidify the commitments from current donors, expand commitments from donors who support other global health partners and new donors in order to reach 1,350 million USD, presented as the base line for the next strategy period, considering the current funding scenario and the funding forecast from current and potential donors.

The Secretariat highlighted the importance of considering replenishment efforts from other global health players such as the Global Fund, CEPI and the ACT-A pledging moment and proposed to use two key moments to have countries reaffirm their financial commitments to Unitaid: the 2022 WHA in May and the UNGA in September.

The Board Members noted that 2022 will be a crowded moment for the resource mobilization landscape and recognized the importance of underlining Unitaid's role in the global health response

during the above-mentioned events, rather than having a single pledging moment. The Board Members also used this opportunity to reaffirm their commitments to Unitaid and offered support for the resource mobilization efforts. It was agreed that the Board Members will take a proactive role in Unitaid's resource mobilization efforts and will highlight the complementarity of mandates and roles of Unitaid and other global health agencies, in particular the Global Fund to avoid competition for funds.

The need for Unitaid to engage with donors from LMICs was emphasised. Some concerns were raised with regards to the reduction of the core funding of more than 50%, and hence the reduction of funding for the three diseases. A specific mechanism to raise funding for HIV, TB and malaria was needed, so that funding is not borrowed from these three diseases to respond to emergencies. The Board Members also called on Unitaid's Secretariat to elaborate on the complementarity of work with the Global Fund, especially in the context of its market shaping strategy, as well as on how Unitaid intends to achieve its goals of the resource mobilization.

9. Report and recommendations from the Finance and Accountability Committee (FAC) and Joint PSC/FAC Committee

The Chair of the Joint PSC/FAC Committee provided a brief update on the Q4 organizational risk register and the results of the report from BDO on performance measurement - both which were presented at the Committee on the 16th of November 2021.

The Chair of the FAC gave an overview of the Unitaid 2022 OPEX budget. The proposed core budget is 3% higher (US\$ 30.9 million) compared to the 2021 budget (US\$ 30.0 million), to which was added an additional request of US\$ 3.2 million to support resources for the extra ACT-A work. These additional efforts will be funded by an overhead recovery cost charged to existing and new donors on additional contributions towards ACT-A, with a respective charge of 2% in the case of existing donors and 7% for new donors (the expected recovery based on current projections would amount to US\$ 3.8 million for 2022). The core budget increase is mainly due to the staff costs which consist of salary step increases, full staffing and a reduction from 7% to 3% on the vacancy rate. The Secretariat also has requested an extra budget line for carbon offsets to support the green initiative (US\$ 0.1 million).

The proposed budget was the object of robust discussion during the meeting and in subsequent interactions between the FAC members. The Chair of the FAC specified that the budget increase reflects the current circumstances after three years of zero-growth budgets. The total budget of US\$ 34.1 million for 2022 is recommended by the FAC to the EB for adoption.

The Chair of the FAC presented the workload analysis provided by the Secretariat giving an overview of the work overload born by the staff over the past year and what portion of this was amount of time spent on ACT-A-related functions.

The Chair of the FAC presented the update of the Investment plan for 2021-2023 and the results of the prioritization mechanism. It was highlighted that the pipelines for the future years are affected by the reduction in core contributions.

The EB approved Resolution 1 : Unitaid 2022 budget (UNITAID/EB39/2021/R1).

10. Report from the Chair of the Proposal Review Committee (PRC)

The Chair of the PRC presented his regular report to the EB, having noted substantial increase of 138% in the estimated PRC time investment in 2021 compared to 2020. Four JRC meetings had been organized in 2021 to review the UnitaidExplore Pediatric Formulations proposals, Post-partum haemorrhage proposals, TB case detection proposals and the O2 RfP proposals with existing grantees. The COVID RfP proposals were also reviewed, following the first round of review by the Secretariat and FIND reviewers.

The selected two UnitaidExplore Pediatric Formulations investments represent high strategic value and good potential for impact with the projects already being implemented. The Chair of the PRC particularly highlighted the reviews of COVID and O2 RfPs, as these did not follow the regular established processes but were rather implemented through grant amendments with existing grantees. Overall these investments being of strategic value, some PRC concerns were noted regarding the risks linked to capacity of health systems, the need for clearer linkages with the first wave of COVID investments in existing grants, the need to consider synergies between a negative test result and an opportunity to vaccinate and the need for greater demonstration of the pathway to impact, including reporting on lives saved through scaling-up access to oxygen. The Chair of the PRC also noted the importance of ensuring that all engagements with industry are non-exclusive, and that risk mitigations steps are adopted to avoid reducing competition in a highly concentrated supplier landscape.

The Board Members thanked the Chair of the PRC for a comprehensive report and recognized the crucial role of the PRC and substantial additional time and energy the PRC has invested in different reviews in 2021. They discussed the role Unitaid has and can play in addressing the monopoly situation for Oxygen and what has been the particular focus of the PRC in addressing difunctional markets of oxygen supply.

Unitaid has been addressing the immediate need for oxygen supply and the need to improve the ability of countries to use and maintain the oxygen systems in hospitals. The engagement of Unitaid Secretariat to increase competition and number of players in countries has been intense and was initiated in a situation when there was no move from other players to address the oxygen supply problem one year after the onset of the pandemic. As a result, Unitaid's investments were catalytic in nature to enable countries bridge acute needs before the big funders engage their resources.

The focus of the PRC has been particularly on how to measure the impact for these investments, especially upstream. The PRC has been mainly challenging on detail and looking for catalytic interventions and how to make the market more competitive.

11. Renewal of Leadership of the Executive Board, Committees and Governance Working Group

The Board Vice-Chair presented the outcome of the closed session of the EB to consider the renewal of the mandate of the Board Chair for additional 2 years. Based on the outstanding work of the Board Chair the EB decided to request her to accept the extension of the mandate. The Board Chair accepted the renewal and therefore the EB unanimously re-elected by acclamation Ms. Touraine to the Office of Board Chair for a further two-year term by approving the resolution

UNITAID/EB39/2021/R5. This appointment will take effect at the closure of the first regular EB meeting in 2022 and will extend till June 2024.

The EB further noted the appointment of the Vice-Chair to a new post as Ambassador of Brazil to Sweden and Latvia.

Having acknowledged the exceptional circumstances of finalizing the development of Unitaid Strategy 2022-2026 which requires strong engagement of the current committee leadership and membership, the EB also approved the resolution UNITAID/EB39/2021/R2 extending the appointment of the current Chairs, Vice-Chairs and Members of both the PSC and FAC for a period of 6 months until the closure of the first regular EB meeting in 2022.

12. Report of the Governance Working Group (GWG)

The Chair of the GWG reported on the progress of work of the working group made in 2021. This year, the group gathered four times to initiate the discussion on the temporary non-voting board seat modalities, the potential creation of new board seats, and the criteria for sharing of existing board seats. She reminded of the criteria adopted by the EB during its 37th meeting, in June 2019, through the resolution EB32/2019/R9; the creation of a temporary, non-voting, shared Board Seat through the resolution EB37/2020/R4 and the invitation for Japan to occupy this Seat reflected in the resolution EB37/2020/R5.

The GWG worked on defining the approach for the creation of two new shared seats with voting rights, allocated to a donor and an implementer in accordance with defined criteria. Besides, the GWG started developing criteria for another approach which is based on sharing of the existing board seats occupied by sovereign countries. There was preliminary appetite for voluntary sharing of seats based on the principle of like-mindedness. Two options were discussed: all seats are shared in principle on voluntary basis; or a seat-sharing mechanism that is based on financial and non-financial criteria. The GWG recommendations were not finalized, and further discussion is needed in 2022 to reach a consensus on these approaches, taking into consideration the necessity to present an offer to Japan by the end of 2022 and the needs of the resource mobilization strategy.

The Board Members were reminded of the continuous support of Japan through a financial contribution to the core and Covid-19 budget despite the economic and financial consequences of the pandemic at national level. Despite the difficulties to make a longer-term financial commitment, Japan reiterated its willingness to meaningfully support Unitaid and invited Unitaid to increase its visibility, explaining its unique role in the Global Health landscape, in order to win the support of Japanese public opinion.

Some Board Members noted potential challenges of preserving efficiency and proper coordination related to sharing of their seats. Several Board Members confirmed their willingness to share their seat, based on the extensive and positive experience they have in boards of other organizations. They noted the importance of ensuring that Unitaid EB remains inclusive and consistent with the new strategy on partners' engagements.

The EB adopted the Resolution UNITAID/EB39/2021/R3 on the six-month extension of appointment of the chair and members of the GWG. The appointments would end upon the closure of the first regular EB meeting in 2022. It has been clarified that the membership of the GWG is open to all Board Members.

The EB also adopted the Resolution UNITAID/EB39/2021/R4 requesting the GWG to continue its work on EB composition and evolution and noted that it will complete its decision within one year of the adoption of the current resolution.

13. Any other business

The Board Chair noted that the Secretariat will post the EB pre-reads on Unitaid website, provided they meet certain conditions in a similar way it is done for the EB minutes and resolutions. It was clarified that this is being implemented following the recommendations of auditors on the implementation of Unitaid Transparency Policy.

The Board Chair congratulated Unitaid Secretariat staff on the extensive work that has gone into preparations of this EB meeting.

The Executive Director congratulated the Board Chair on the reappointment. He thanked the Board Vice-Chair for her service to Unitaid and wished her success in her new appointment as ambassador to Sweden and Latvia. The Executive Director also thanked all the Board Members for their clear guidance.

The Board Members joined the Communities Delegation in expressing their thanks to Kenly Sikwese for his outstanding support to the delegation.

14. List of participants

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